

Stranger Things 3 by HawkinsLab

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Summary: It's been almost a year since Hawkins Lab shut down and the residents of the sleepy Indiana town resumed a normal life. Now though in the summer of 85, the gang will experience a vacation like nothing they have dealt with before. (Please read/review I will attempt to update frequently)

1. Chapter One synopsis

CHAPTER ONE:

THE BOYS OF SUMMER

"its summer of 85 and the gang is all ready to enjoy vacation out at the recently reopened Camp Fortune, where they will meet both new friends and old.

2. Chapter One prologue

STRANGER

THINGS

3

Prologue: December 1984.

Most reports said it was the worst chill to hit the Midwest in twenty years, and for the small town of Hawkins, it was especially rough. With limited police and the closure of Hawkins Lab, power outages became normal during the strong storm. Whether it was downed power lines or car wrecks, there seemed to be no end in sight for the chaotic winter.

At the Wheeler Home, they sat around a candle-lit dinner table eating cold pizza, each of the children clearly wishing to be somewhere, anywhere besides there. As though trying to break the silence, Mike Wheeler's mother commented, "Well, this is nice isn't it? A real family dinner."

Mike resisted the urge to roll his eyes as he stared down at the leftover cold pizza, and muttered, "This is bull shit."

"Michael! Language!" his mother shouted even as his father lowered the paper he was reading and glared at his young son.

"Mom, can I please just go to Lucas'? They have power!" Mike insisted. "You haven't even touched your plate!" his mother objected.

"You just want to go play some stupid game," His sister Nancy said smartly.

"Nancy gets to leave!" he pointed out to which his mother sighed and rolled her eyes before glaring at her husband, "Ted a little help here?"

"The boy has a point," his father said not bothering to look up from the newspaper.

"I have to study for winter finals," Nancy said to which her younger brother rolled his eyes and replied, "You mean make out session with Jonathan?" He then pretended to make out with himself as his sister huffed and remarked, "Mom, am I excused?"

"Go ahead dear," his mother replied causing Mike to look at her aghast. "That isn't fair!" he shouted angrily.

"Your sister has a car, you don't. These roads are too dangerous for you to go out on," she replied to his demands as she returned to her meal.

"This is bull shit," Mike muttered causing his father to drop the paper and mutter, "All right that's enough from you, go to your room young man."

Mike slammed his plate down and stormed upstairs to his room as he stared out at the chilly evening and watched his sister drive off to the other side of town.

Lucas Sinclair's House was already becoming a hot spot for others seeking warmth, Mister Sinclair had made the wise choice to purchase a backup generator over the summer in the event of such a blackout and two friends had already arrived to enjoy the electricity that provided them an oasis from the snow.

Will and Dustin arrived with jackets and boots and smiles, each eager to get a look at the Christmas present that Lucas had gotten early: it was called an Atari.

To them it was paradise and to their parents an excuse to let the kids use the guest room as they busied watching the Olympic Games. Away from the cares of the world, away from all the harm that had occurred to them two months ago.

Joyce Byers was still recovering from that hurt though, and the chill in the air only seemed to bring back stronger memories of Bob. Each time she passed thru town and saw the Radio Shack she thought about the man that she had come to love and how quickly he had been lost to her.

All because of a force that she barely understood, one that had almost consumed her youngest son. She remembered whenever she had come home after everything was said and done and found a reminder of Bob's gruesome attacker in her freezer that she had yelled and screamed at Jonathan to bury it. Even now as she drove toward the sheriff office to spend Christmas Eve with Jim Hopper she couldn't help but to feel angry about his insistence that some evidence didn't need to stay buried.

Still, she did at least get it out of her house. That was all that really mattered.

Jonathan had enlisted Dustin's help to find a new apt to hide their amazing find, and they did in the form of the freezer in Dustin's garage. It had the same cold temperature that allowed the flesh not to rot and as Dustin insisted, meant they were closer to being legendary discoverers. Jonathan didn't truly believe the idea of using the Demadog as some new find for fame or fortune.

But as leverage had not the story he and Nancy sent out caused Hawkins Lab to shut their doors. Since that successful trip, he had been more focused on Nancy's attentions than anything.

And Dustin, Dustin had wallowed in sadness for a few weeks over the affections the newest member of the party had given to Lucas. Even now as he sat opposite of his friend in the living room he felt inwardly angry that he still hadn't won over any girl his age. According to Nancy Wheeler in a few years he would turn heads.

But that grief and anger made him forget entirely about the find he and Jonathan had hid away in his mother's garage and as the storm grew stronger, the power outage even hit his neck of the woods. Thankfully his mom had thought going to the Sinclair's would be a great idea and so they had dared to hit the slick roads.

But inside his house, the outage had caused the freezer to go out, the ice to melt and the warmth to hit everything inside it. So much so, that the next time Mrs Henderson went out to get a popsicle she was able to retrieve one without even noticing that the latch on the freezer had come unhinged... and something had come out alive.

3. Chapter One, Part One

The countdown seemed to stretch out indefinitely. Each and every student wore a look of frustration and boredom on their face as they looked toward the clock, its hands seeming to come to a snail's pace.

It was the last class for Hawkins Middle School, the last day of the 8th grade for most if not all of them and it was only two minutes before the final bell. But still, for anyone seated in the room listening to Mister Clarke explain what their summer reading assignments would be for the fifteenth time; it definitely felt much much longer.

Then, it finally came, like a thunderous alarm that signaled a stampede, the bell roared across the entire school campus and collectively the group of children yelled and shouted excitedly as they suddenly regained their energy and leapt from their seats.

For four boys in particular the wait for this moment had seemed extraordinarily long especially after everything they had gone thru during the winter. Though summer meant they could escape school, to the four it meant that the first day of freedom was finally upon them.

There was another reason that the boys were so excited and as they reached their bikes, Dustin Henderson was the first to speak, "You really think your mom will say yes?"

He was talking to Will Byers who had knelt down to unlock his bike from the rack and gave his friend a shrug, trying to hide his excitement.

"She has to," Lucas chimed in.

"She said we would talk about it," Will replied causing all of his friends to look at each other worriedly.

"I think that means yes," Will explained with a smile as he got on his bike and added, "I'll be on the channel later and let you guys know!"

The other three knew better than to get their hopes up. The idea of

summer camp alone was more than enough to make them all feel giddy. But without Will, it wouldn't be quite the same.

It had been almost a year since they had gone thru the worst kind of hell possible and Will more so than others. None of them really liked to talk about what their friend had experienced last October, but it was easy to see why his mom was reluctant to let him go to camp.

Still, as they wordlessly stood there on the edge of the school, Lucas repeated what he felt had to be the outcome, "She has to say yes."

Lucas rode off as Dustin and Mike finished getting their own bikes ready and then started to ride together. "Hey Mike, you think she will be there too?" Dustin asked as they increased speed.

Mike Wheeler shot him a smile and replied, "Its summer vacation! Anything is possible!"

Joyce Byers did not like it one bit.

She sat at her kitchen table, trying again to resist the urge to pick up another cigarette as she glanced out the window to where she knew her son would be riding up at any minute.

She had been delaying the inevitable for at least a month. And Will had been sure to drop subtle hints, from little model canoes at her bedside made of paper mache to a brochure on Camp Fortune.

She hasn't found it in her heart to say no, especially because he had been so good over the spring and returned to getting almost all straight As.

Will had worked hard for this, but no matter what she still couldn't convince herself that he should go to camp.

Instead as she looked out she saw her oldest drive up and hop out, his expression one more of happiness than melancholy lately.

Will knew that was because Jonathan had started dating Nancy Wheeler and it made her glad to see that a sense of normalcy was returning to their lives. As Jonathan entered the house she stood up and waited for him to get to the kitchen, his eyes immediately

catching sight of the brochure.

"What do we tell Will?" Joyce asked.

Jonathan slid his hands into his pocket and then sat down at the table to look at the small booklet.

"Place looks pretty cool, where is it?" he asked.

"The other side of Ridgeport, over twenty miles from here," she replied trying not to let that little fact stress her out more.

"Will has been talking about summer camp since he was seven years old," Jonathan commented as he slid the booklet back toward her and added, "He can't stay a kid forever Mom."

She looked at her oldest in frustration, and then heard the wheels to Will's bike come to a skidding halt outside even as Jonathan left to his room and muttered, "Good luck."

She glared at him even as Will came racing in wearing a large grin from ear to ear and he said, "Hey mom!"

"Hey sweetie, you sure did shoot home fast," she said trying to figure out the right words to say.

"I had to know, as soon as possible. It was killing me all day. Mom, do I get to go?" Will asked, his eyes now wide and filled with hope.

"Sweetie, come on now. I told you I would have a decision about this at the end of the day. Besides you know I had to work a double shift," she said, trying to avoid the subject.

"Mom! It is the end of the day! I want this so bad mom, more than anything!" he complained, following her from room to room.

"It's a big decision. And there are so many questions, who are the teachers, how many kids will be there, what are there emergency procedures," Joyce began. "You've had over a month to find all that shit out," Will said angrily.

"Hey now, with that sort of attitude you aren't going anywhere

anytime fast," she snapped back.

"You're not going to let me go are you?" Will said as he fought back the tears.

"Will, I just... I don't think it's safe," she said as she bent down to reach her son.

He pulled away from her and glared at her with tears in his eyes as he shouted, "I hate you!"

"Will!" Joyce muttered even as he rushed to his room and slammed the door.

She sighed ruffling her hands thru her hair and glanced across the hall at Jonathan who apparently had seen the whole conversation.

"Talk to him," she pleaded as she stormed off. But Jonathan had other plans rather than focus on his baby brother for the moment. Summer was finally here and that meant more time to spend with Nancy.

He went to knock on Will's door but only got a customary, "Go away," from him and shrugged knowing for now there wasn't much he could do. Besides which, he didn't fully agree with his mom anyway. Will had been thru so much, he deserved this, he thought.

He grabbed his jacket and went out the door again as she asked, "What did he say?"

"Mom, just let him go. You'll hate yourself all summer if you don't," Jonathan called out as he got in his car and drove away to leave her standing there, still just as frustrated and stressed as before.

4. Chapter One, Part Two

Spring had been especially hard for Nancy. Not because she had difficulty with classes or because she wasn't ready to face her senior year.

But it was the sad forlorn face that Steve Harrington had worn for almost six months each time they crossed paths in the hallways of Hawkins High.

They had been friendly to each other, but each time they passed Nancy could still feel that affection she once had for him and it made her heart hurt. Today on the first day of summer she knew it would be especially hard.

The first day of summer was their anniversary, two years to the date; when they first had decided to start getting together. She never would have dreamed to have the experiences she had since then, and Nancy liked to think that part of the reason she had matured in her relationship was because of that.

As she stepped out onto the yard of Hawkins High, she held her head up and tried to focus on the positives, like how Jonathan was already getting a part time summer job or how she was sure she would receive a letter of acceptance any day from one of Chicago's prestigious colleges.

Life was moving on for her, with or without Steve and she couldn't waste much more time feeling sorry for him.

Steve had left class only three minutes after Nancy, placing his shades on he could be spotted dashing across the school yard toward an unfamiliar car.

Nancy watched as a tall blonde girl got out and quickly embraced Steve and she tried to hide her astonishment. Steve made it seem like he didn't see his ex as he kissed this new girl and then climbed inside the red Ford, his eyes drifting momentarily to Nancy as she stood there in disbelief.

Behind her, the horn on Jonathan's car took her back to the present as she nearly dropped her books and then scrambled into the passenger side.

Jonathan immediately could sense something was wrong and asked, "You okay, Nance?"

She pushed aside the thought to cry for the boy she thought would never move on and muttered, "Let's just get out of Hawkins."

He didn't make a word as he shifted the car and they peeled off from the parking lot, passing a larger bus that was moving toward downtown area.

Across town, Mike Wheeler sat in his small basement under a fake tent and waited with his Radio clinging to him like a barnacle. Again he tested the frequency and asked, "Anybody hear from Will?"

There was a brief pause and then Dustin chimed in; "Not a peep."

"Nothing here," Lucas added and Mike sighed, realizing his worst fears could be realized. This could be the worst summer ever. "Hey my mom is calling me to get ready, see you guys later," Lucas said and his radio chirped silent.

Mike sighed, clicking the radio again and saying, "Will, you there? Come in Will!"

"I think she must have said no," Dustin chimed in after another moment of silence.

"Yeah," Mike muttered closing the channel and tossing the radio into a basket of blankets.

He stood up, ready to go vent his frustration maybe on a new LEGO set when he glanced back at the radio again and tested it again.

For now the channel was silent save for him and then he spoke into it. "El," he said, speaking the girl's name that had seemed to leave a mark on his heart.

"I know you can hear this," Mike whispered as he closed his eyes and

added, "I just want something to go right this summer. Please come home El."

When only silence greeted him, Mike grabbed a small wrapped gift near the staircase and then rushed up stairs trying to distract himself again.

When the bus had come to a stop near the intersection of Paisley and Denton, the girl had been thinking of the last time she had taken such a trip. A secret rendezvous with a stranger that she shared a connection to in a city she hardly remembered.

She had never told Hopper about the trip, and she wondered why now as she stepped off the bus again in downtown Hawkins that she even thought about it. There was nothing there connecting her to the girl, or to the past that she had tried so hard to fight against for two years.

Hopper was right beside her, carrying heavy luggage and wearing some new clothes he had bought in Indianapolis. It was a fresh start for both of them thanks in no small way to Doctor Owens.

"Jane, come on. I need to swing by the station before we head home," Hopper told her. Even after six months she still found it hard to adjust to the fact that they were family now.

She grabbed her own bag and followed him to where their ride was waiting for them. Joyce Byers looked genuinely happy to see them both and gave her and Hopper a quick hug as she tossed aside a cigarette. "Hey you two," Joyce said with a weary smile.

El knew that when adults normally didn't say much it meant something else was on their mind so for now she quietly got into the backseat and waited as the adults took a moment to talk alone.

"So good to have you back Hopper," Joyce said as they gave each other another quick hug and she added, "How has she been? Has therapy been good for her?"

"Yeah, you know the doctors are saying there's been real progress. So yeah, definitely good," Hopper answered as he stood there and

crossed his arms. "How is Will?"

"Good, you know. Making it," she said trailing off even as he gave her a curious look and said dryly, "Wow that was almost believable."

"It's just, this stupid summer camp. He won't let up about it," Joyce muttered.

"What camp? Fortune?" He guessed as he nodded and said, "I saw a few signs on the way in, looks like old man Wright got it back in business this year."

"Will thinks I'm killing him by not letting him go," Joyce explained. He glanced thru the window to where his adoptive daughter sat and remarked, "Yeah well, I don't blame you."

"Maybe once you settle things in you can come by and talk to him?" Joyce suggested as they got in the car.

Eleven stayed quiet as they kept talking, her mind reeling as she thought about seeing her friends again. Still she wished to know more and had often learned the best way to do that was by being observant. That was what Hopper had taught her while they had to hide. Patience had been hard for her, but now as they drove thru Hawkins to the police station she found it easy to wait as she wasn't sure she was ready to see them all again.

When they pulled up to the station, Hopper immediately sensed something was off as there weren't that many cars parked outside and he muttered, "Did they forget to pay the bill while I was gone?" Joyce and El stepped out warily, as he kept his hand on his holster and they all walked into the darkened office slowly together.

Hopper knew something wasn't quite right and he half considered whipping his gun out when El grabbed his hand and then the lights abruptly came on.

All of the people that they were close to stood in one room and shouted "Surprise!" as the three visibly looked relieved and Hopper glared at Joyce. "I know you had a part in this," he said wagging his finger at her as the welcome home party began.

5. Chapter One, Part Three

Dustin, Lucas and Mike wasted no time running to El and giving her the biggest hug they could muster. For the three boys she was more than just the strange girl they had met two years ago, now she was one of their closest friends.

They each shared an excited look at each other, perhaps thinking of all the things they had gone thru and then Mike presented his gift to her and said, "For you."

She took it and shook it and then Lucas said, "I bet you don't even have to open it to know what's inside." She smiled even as she closed her eyes and used her unique gifts to try and see what was in the box.

"A ring?" she guessed to which Mike nodded and the two other boys cooed and teased him even as she opened it to look at the peculiar design of the ring. "It... changes," she observed as the ring shifted from one color to the next.

"It's called a mood ring, it gives you an idea of what you are feeling right now," Mike explained as he pointed toward the little chart at the bottom of the box and added, "See, this tells you what each color means."

"What I'm feeling?" El repeated as she put it on and it shifted several colors until finally settling on black. "Yeah, I remember you said the doctors in Indianapolis told you that you had to get control of your emotions... so... I figured this would help," he said nervously.

She looked down at it as it shifted colors again first to orange and then to a soft pink. She smiled and hugged him tight. "Thank you Mike," she said and he knew she meant it.

Elsewhere Flo was bringing all the adults some coffee and surprisingly that included Jonathan and Nancy.

Nancy offered Hopper a new sweater and she explained, "It was sort of a late Christmas gift. Since you weren't here I figured I give to you now for this year."

"Thanks Nancy, it's perfect," Hopper said even as one of the deputies pat him softly on the shoulder and remarked, "So does this mean we should clean out a locker for you Chief?"

Hopper looked at him as he sipped his coffee and remarked, "I haven't played cops and robbers for almost six months, Bill. I'm sure I got a bit rusty living the city life."

"Oh you are being modest, Flo teased and then poked his belly and added, "But it does look like you have put on a few."

"You don't need to remind me Flo," he said testily as he glanced up and saw the new sheriff walk in. "Besides the only gun I carry now is a personal one. You guys have enough brass to go around here," Hopper said as he shook the burly man's hand.

"Easy there, Hop. I could get you back on the Force if you wanted, maybe as my right hand deputy?" Phillip Mitchell suggested as they shook roughly. "I appreciate the generosity, really. But I know how to get by," he insisted.

Part of him truly wasn't sure how he was going to get by in Hawkins now especially since he had resigned as sheriff last December. Indianapolis had been good to him, mostly thanks to people like Doctor Owens shopping the bill and putting it on insurance.

But now that the therapy had come to an end, they were given a one way ticket back to Hawkins with no real end game in sight. Sure he still had some savings but Hopper has never been one to just sit still. He needed to work. Once the crowd started to mingle he and Joyce stayed close to the back and she leaned against the wall and he glanced at her sideways.

"So Will decided to stay home and pout huh?" He commented as he swirled his coffee in his styrofoam cup.

She nodded and said, "Jonathan says that if I don't do it I'm going to never forgive myself. But it's just so far..."

"He might be right, the kid does need a little space," Hopper admitted as he gazed over to where Jane was talking with the boys.

"I just don't want anything to happen to him," she admitted as she tried to not stress about it.

The two stood there in silence, each one fretting about their kids in different ways even as Jonathan tried to take Nancy's attention on the present.

"Maybe we should just blow town now," Jonathan suggested as he looked at his girlfriend, her face still a mystery of emotions.

"It's fine," she lied as she looked out the window toward the road and he muttered, "What did Steve do now?"

She looked at him in shock and asked, "What makes you think it has anything to do with him?"

"It always does," Jonathan said releasing his grip on her hand. "Look you don't have a right to just wildly sling accusations in my face!" Nancy said. "Fine. I'm sorry. So you want to get out of town? Head for the lodge and forget all about Hawkins and Steve Harrington altogether?" Jonathan shot back.

She bit her lip, unable to make a decision and he replied, "Like I said. It's always about him."

She tried to stop him from walking back inside but didn't find the strength to fight it. The truth was it was more than just Steve's New girl that bothered her. She was sure this would be her last summer here in Hawkins. And that scared her more than anything.

6. Chapter One, Part Four

As the party died down, everyone made their way home and Jonathan gently knocked on his brother's door again to see if Will was all right.

"What do you want?" Will asked sourly as he opened it and saw that his little brother had spent the day dismantling all his models.

"Hey bud. I see you have been getting busy with a demolition project," he said as Will tossed some parts into a bag and added, "Nothing else better to do." L

"I would have figured you would be packing," Jonathan remarked. "Packing? For what?" Will asked dryly but had a tinge of curiosity in his voice.

"Well, I talked to Mom and... looks like Camp Fortune is going to have one less empty bunk," his older brother explained. Will's eyes widened in disbelief as he leapt from his bed into his brother's arms.

"Are you, are you for real?" Will asked as he tried to hold back his excitement. Will ran to the kitchen where his mom was sitting trying to look calm.

"Thank you, Thank you thank you!" He said squeezing her tight.

"Okay, look settle down," she said as she glared at her oldest and still didn't feel fully committed to this plan. "There are going to be some ground rules," she explained.

Will sat and tried to listen, his heart beating faster as Jonathan chimed in, "Number one is that you will never leave your bunk at night."

"We're getting to that," Joyce muttered and then placed her hands in his legs and stated, "Jonathan works at that little hunting and fishing store on route 56, you know the one?"

"Yeah, I call there if I have trouble?" He guessed to which his mom replied, "you call every night and every morning. No matter what."

"I promise," Will said with a big smile.

"Go pack your things you goofball before I change my mind," his mom said and pushed him away. Jonathan was smiling big too, after what Nancy had done to him earlier that evening he felt like this sort of trip was exactly what he needed.

Hopper had found it easy to settle in the secluded cabin again, even though it was just as unkept and trashy as it had ever been. Maybe that will be my first project, get this place up to snuff he reasoned as Jane went to her room and started to clean it up a little.

Still, it felt good to be home again, even if it was a little dusty it was still theirs and what made it even better this time is there was no reason to keep looking over their shoulders.

Since Hawkins Lab had closed shop last October, he had kept an eye on news reports and articles connecting to anyone that had ever been involved in the project to see if there was any one still looking for Jane.

The girl who had become a permanent part of his life wasn't safe until all the noise quieted down and the therapy that Doctor Owens had issued her worked.

According to him, the idea of the treatment was to make it so that Jane could live a normal life. But Hopper didn't really know if that would ever be possible especially after everything they had gone thru.

As if echoing his fears, the curly haired fourteen year stood in his door for a moment and then asked, "What's summer camp?"

Hopper glanced at her, knowing that her friends had likely told her about their upcoming trip to Camp Fortune and he sighed.

"Nothing you need to worry about," he told her immediately as he pushed aside some old photo albums.

"It sounded fun," Jane remarked.

"Yeah?" Hopper said as he looked at her and added, "Well you can

forget it."

She looked at him indignantly and growled, "Will gets to go." He shrugged and said, "Well at least he doesn't have super powers. Remember what we talked about."

"You said we were coming here to make a fresh start," Jane argued and added, "A fresh start means forgetting about the past."

"Look, that's kind of hard to do when you've managed to save the world twice," Hopper explained as he added, "Besides you would get bored at camp. Nothing to do there but get eaten by mosquitoes and get lost in the woods." Inwardly he still couldn't believe that Joyce had agreed to let Will go and he wondered if he would ever have the guts to let Jane.

"Don't look at me like that; this isn't up for discussion," Hopper snarled.

"It isn't fair," Jane began to which he shouted, "Fair? You want to talk about fair? How about the fact that I sacrificed everything to help you and it seems like any chance you get you want to run off and get in trouble."

"I can handle myself," she replied sharply as she stormed back to her room. "That isn't the point, we came here to relax and to start over; not to go across all of the countryside and parade ourselves around!" Hopper shouted out as he followed her.

"I just want to," she paused and looked at him and then said, "I want to have fun."

He looked at her with a feeling of pain and frustration, recalling how his sick daughter had spoken words like that during her later months when the cancer had gotten really bad.

He had tried so hard to keep things together and no matter how hard he tried it seemed like it all fell apart. He wondered if the same thing could be happening now.

"Let me sleep on it, all right kid?" Hopper said as he closed her door giving her a small glimmer of hope.

El sat there and listened to the radio to see if the boys were still chattering as the night faded away and finally fell asleep, clinging to the chance she might get to taste what fun was like.

7. Chapter One, Part Five

Morning came to Hawkins, but for Dustin Henderson he had been awake for almost a whole hour. His mom wanted to be sure that he didn't forget anything on his camping trip.

Five pairs of socks, six pants, two swimming trunks, eight shirts, two jackets, seven pairs of underwear and other amenities later, he was standing in the door wearing what had to be the world's largest backpack and leaning against a large suitcase.

"Mom, I'm going to a summer camp not Afghanistan!" Dustin said in frustration as she returned with several toothbrushes, shampoos and other bathroom items.

"You can never be too prepared!" she reminded him as she gave him a kiss on the forehead.

He rubbed it off and sighed as he trudged to the car, knowing that the sooner he get out of Hawkins the better.

Dustin wasn't sure which part was worse, the fact that she was making it seem like he was leaving the country or that she insisted on driving him to the Bus yard.

Already several other parents were doing the same thing and Dustin got out of the car even as his mother reminded him again to be sure he didn't forget anything.

"And be sure that you take your vitamins!" she shouted as he slammed the door. "Jesus Mom, enough already, I got it," Dustin remarked as he got his suitcase out of the car and spotted Lucas and Mike arriving on their bikes.

Their parents didn't care and for a moment he wished his mom didn't as she got out of the car and used a Polaroid to take pictures for his trip.

"Gosh you look like such a little man," she said as she squeezed him right in front of his friends.

"Mom please," he said trying to escape her grip.

Finally it seemed like the goodbyes were over and he joined his friends who all seemed to be sharing a little laugh.

"Knock it off, assholes," Dustin said to which Lucas replied, "Sorry, it is kind of funny dude."

"Still no sign of Will," Mike admitted as he walked toward the Bus.

"Seems like we may be the three musketeers this year," Lucas replied.

Dustin paused for a moment as he was about to get on the bus, his mind flashing back to the previous October and the strange creature he had briefly had as a pet.

In that brief moment as the Bus doors opened in front of him he recalled what he had done with the Demodog and muttered, "Holy shit."

"Son, you coming or what?" The Bus driver asked impatiently. "Dude, what's the matter?" Lucas asked as he saw Dustin's face go white.

"Nothing," he replied hastily as he got on the bus and tried to remember what had happened to the creature.

A memory of how he and Steve had hid it flashed through his mind along with Joyce's anger at finding the strange creature not long after.

Then it was gone. Why the hell did he have to remember that now, he thought sourly as he sat down alongside Lucas. The bus was about to roll off when another hand pounded on the side and all three boys looked to the door to see who it might be.

The door opened again and a familiar face stepped into the door, smiling at all of them but perhaps especially so toward Lucas. "What's up losers," Max said as she pushed her red hair under her cap and sat down in the seat in front of them.

"When did you get back?" Dustin asked to which she smirked and said, "Last week, my dad let me start summer early since I had to cut

my trip to Cali short."

"Nice, welcome back MadMax," Lucas said as he grinned toward the girl who seemed to have a crush on him. "Thanks stalker, it's good to be back," she said even as the bus moved again and all of them prepared to leave Hawkins behind.

That same morning, Phil Mitchell had insisted Hopper stop by the station which he assumed had to be about the job offer again so he was already going over in his head the reasons why he didn't want it, none of them sounding that great. Jane had been quiet the whole morning not saying a word about camp and he almost considered it, but each instinct told him it would be a bad idea.

He let her sit in the lobby as he went into the new sheriff's office and sat down commenting, "This better not be a speech Phil, I don't like getting woke up this early anymore."

"Look I know what you are trying to do right Hop, and I didn't really want to bother you just wanted a little advise on how to handle the local wildlife. Hawkins sure has a lot of migratory bears this time of year and we been getting calls left and right," Phil explained as he took off his hat.

"So? Call the backup, you still do have that right," Hopper joked. "This is serious. A ranger died last week up near Lake Fortune I think they are getting too close to civilization for my liking," Mitchell remarked and leaned forward adding, "Didn't you use to know some good poachers?"

He glared at the sheriff surprised that he would even say such a thing and he remarked, "First of all, poaching is against the law. Secondly, I hope you didn't call me down here just to chit chat about bears. Last I checked we aren't the warden service."

Phil nodded and glanced at the girl who sat looking lost in the lobby and remarked, "So, this really is going to be the new you huh? Jim Hawkins, single dad..." Mitchell shook his head and remarked, "Well maybe you can get it right this time."

Hopper clenched his fists, stood up and remarked angrily, "We're

done here."

"Think it over Hop! My door is always open," the new sheriff called out as Jane followed him to the car.

"What happened?" she asked as he sat there at the steering wheel and tried to control his rage. He knew Phil, the man had come out of Hawkins High a few years earlier than him and fell right into money.

He was always on the side of things that benefited him most, so when he first heard that Mitchell had taken up his stead as sheriff he wondered why.

Now he knew. This was just a stepping stool and Mitchell wanted to use anything and anyone to get to what he wanted. Hopper slammed his fists angrily against his horn, beating his anger out on the automobile as his adoptive daughter looked on.

Finally he relaxed and then glanced at a road map that was sticking out of the cubby hole next to her. "Have you learned how to read a map?" He asked.

Jane nodded silently as he started the car and said, "See if you can tell me which way to Lake Fortune."

8. Chapter One, Part Six

Camp Fortune sat near one of the most forested areas in West Indiana, a true place to get away from it all. And as the Bus pulled into the gravel road, Lucas sat up and looked out his window to peer at the impressive main building.

The large wooden fence and gates were already opened as the other buses from across the nearby area piled in and Lucas could not help but contain his excitement as they all piled out.

That excitement only grew as the other buses opened their doors and he realized that there were at least two hundred kids here.

"This reminds me of the opening day for surfing in Cali," Max said as she squeezed his hand excitedly.

"That's so cool," Lucas admitted and then the redhead tightened her grip on his hand and muttered, "Are there older kids here too?"

Sure enough he spotted some buses from nearby Hawthorne and said, "Ninth graders, why?" "Tracy Walker, that's why. She tormented me since I came here," she said in frustration and added, "My lucky day came when she moved in February." "Maybe she isn't here," Lucas suggested even as the headmasters for the camp blew their whistles to get everyone to gather in the main facility.

Max stayed quiet about her concerns, walking alongside Dustin and helping with his huge suitcase inside.

"All right people listen up!" the larger black man said as he and a skinny white older woman took to the stage to get everyone's attention. "First of all welcome to Camp Fortune, on behalf of all of us here we are so glad you could join us for our grand reopening," the man said as he gestured toward some of the other staff that was lingering around the room.

"I'm Headmaster Johnson, this is Headmaster Peters. We will be in charge of the boys and girls cabins, and we want to go over a few grounds rules with you..."

Dustin was too busy looking thru the crowd at all of the girls from other towns to listen and some, he thought for sure, were looking back at him. He had made certain that one thing he packed above all else was the special hair spray Steve had given him last Christmas and Dustin was determined this was the time he would get a win with the ladies.

Back in Hawkins, Nancy was forced to use an older bicycle to make her way over to the Byers' residence. Even though her parents had kept promising to get her a car, Nancy still felt like one of the few high schoolers that didn't have a pair of wheels. She wanted to apologize to Jonathan for her clumsy behavior at the party the night before but when she arrived she found that he and his little brother were preparing to get in his car.

"Hey, are you taking him along for the lodge?" Nancy asked in surprise to which Jonathan looked up and saw her and remarked, "I thought you were too busy swooning over Steve." "Please, I don't want to fight, what's going on?" she asked as Will finished putting his bags in the car.

"Camp Fortune, Will's been wanting to go all year. I made an agreement to work extra hours up at the Hunting store so I could stay close to him," Jonathan explained. She looked surprised for a moment and muttered, "Oh..."

"Look, I'm sorry I got mad. But you have to admit; you are still a little miffed about Steve. I figure, a little time apart will be good," Jonathan explained. "Right, Yeah," she said as she crossed her arms and wished she hadn't been so stupid about the whole thing.

"See you around Nancy," he commented. She said the same to him as they got in the car and she sighed preparing to trek back toward Home even as Joyce came out and got her own truck started.

"Hey Nancy, you just missed Jonathan," Joyce paused and then saw how sad the girl looked and then remarked, "Hey you need a ride home?"

Nancy nodded and placed her bike in the back of the truck before getting in and trying to push away any hint of frustration she had

with Joyce's son.

As they drove into town, Joyce glanced at the girl and commented, "He'll come around. Give him some time."

"It was my fault," Nancy admitted as they turned a corner.

"Well; I'm sure it will work out," Joyce said. Nancy didn't bother to respond as they arrived at her house and she remarked, "Thanks for the ride."

"Hey," Joyce added grabbing Nancy's hand before she left. "If you need anything sweetie..."

Nancy smiled and said thank you before heading inside, trying to figure out a way to get her mind off of things.

But instead all she could do was get to her room and flop on the bed, the sudden realization that this last summer wasn't turning out to be that great after all.

9. Chapter One, Part Seven

The trees along the highway zoomed past her line of vision like a blurry haze as the old station wagon rocked down the road, one of Hopper's favorite songs playing on the radio.

She looked toward the countryside, thinking of the strange New landscape as a bountiful adventure waiting to happen, but soon Hopper made it clear that the reasons for their trip weren't entirely selfish.

"This is a trial run, I want to feel the place out and see how you do. Understand?" He asked as they moved toward another backroad. "Trial run?" Jane repeated as she thought about what that meant and then asked, "How long?"

"I don't know yet. You should be glad we are even coming out here," Hopper replied as he looked at the anger on his adoptive daughter's face. "If everything checks out it will be for two weeks," he said as she smiled and then looked down at something on her left hand.

He glanced at it too watching as the ring shifted colors and remarked, "Hey, are you doing that?" Before she could respond he growled, "I told you no powers."

"It's not. It's a gift," she snapped back as she hid her hand from sight and he raised a curious eyebrow and then smiled, glad to see that someone was being sweet to her.

"Ah. Mike Wheeler huh?" Hopper asked with a grin. He had always liked the kid. And the two had been practically inseparable during their brief time at Hawkins last winter.

"Maybe," she said shyly to which he nudged her, "Jane and Mike, sitting in a tree..."

She smiled and giggled as they approached the campsite, her eyes taking in every new sight and sound.

A gentle drizzle was falling down as they pulled up near the main

office building and Hopper grabbed his coat and then jumped out of the station wagon and rushed around to the passenger side to get her out as the rain started to intensify.

Across Camp, the boys were getting settled into their respective bunks and Lucas sat down his things on one bed when another dark skinned boy shot up and remarked, "Hey, this spot is already taken."

"Sorry dude, chill," Lucas told him as he looked for another spot and Mike settled him near to him as Lucas said, "what's up with him?"

Mike shrugged and said, "This is kind of cool though right?" Dustin sighed from above them in a top bunk and said, "Will would have freaked to see that Lake."

"Yeah," Mike said, still disappointed that his friend hadn't made it. He had held onto that hope all day, but now it seemed like that wasn't happening.

Just then; the boy that had been rude to Lucas a few seconds ago walked up to them and remarked, "What are you doing hanging with these nerds anyway?"

"I'm sorry do I know you?" Lucas shot back.

"Ned, Ned Wilkes, we had the same art class last year, then my brother and I moved back upstate," the boy answered.

"Well Ned; these nerds are my friends. And if you don't want trouble, I suggest you back off," Lucas replied icily.

"Okay, whatever," Ned said raising his hands up defensively as he walked away. "Asshole," Mike said.

Lucas looked at them with a laugh and remarked, "I never realized it was so obvious we were nerds."

"Your girl called us losers and you didn't stand up to her," Dustin pointed out to which he countered, "That's different."

"Oh cause you like to sneak off to the A/V club for kiss and tell?" Dustin shot back. Lucas' eyes widened as he muttered, "What? No I

didn't."

His friend rolled his eyes and said, "Dude. I SAW you." "Ewww pervert," Lucas shot back to which his friend shouted, "Ahh so you don't deny it!"

Mike's attention was elsewhere as he heard a soft clattering noise and nudged Lucas saying, "Hey, did you hear that?"

The other two stopped their squabbling for a minute to listen and hear the low noise. Dustin tossed his flashlight to Mike and the trio stepped out to the porch of their cabin to look into the rainy night.

Turning on the light they looked about and tried to figure out the source of the noise as they did it seemed to grow closer. Then they jumped when they saw a raccoon dash out of the bushes. Behind them, they heard Ned laugh at their embarrassment and call out, "Y'all are such babies."

The three came back inside and closed the screen door, each looking at other and knowing that their past experiences had likely made them a bit jumpy.

They relaxed for a moment, laughing nervously at each other when another noise made them jump again and turn about to see a car rolling up toward them. "Jesus, what the hell!" Dustin shouted as the car engine died and they saw Jonathan and Will get out.

Immediately the trio ran out to greet their friend, overjoyed that he had come and Will did the same for them.

Jonathan stood back for a moment as the four embraced in the rain and then hastily they got back to the front porch while Jonathan got the bags for his brother.

Mike smiled as Will laughed and shook off the rain and he was beginning to think maybe this summer wasn't going to be so bad after all.

10. Chapter One, Part Eight

Eleven listened as Hopper talked to the two rangers who were running the camp, learning just what Hopper's reasons for coming here were.

"Sheriff Mitchell huh? I didn't know that he cared about these parts up here," the lady ranger said. "Yeah we been hearing some reports about some bears in the area. Since I was up here I figured I could stop by. Maybe check it out in the morning?" Hopper suggested.

The two rangers exchanged a look at the man said, "Yeah. Sure that would be fine. We can find a place for you and your girl to stay."

"Thanks Matt," Hopper said as he and the lady walked out to where his adoptive daughter was waiting. "I think we have a free bunk for the little lady, I can take her over to the girl's cabin," Peters remarked. Hopper hugged her and said, "Go on then."

Back in Hawkins, Nancy had spent most of the day pouting and trying to not think about the mess she was in. Her dad called her down and she had a quiet dinner with them as she kept staring off and thinking of Steve and Jonathan.

"Dear eat your food," her mom said as her dad continued to read the paper and then she muttered, "Can I Be excused to my room?"

"Hey since your boyfriend is out maybe you can help me around the house," her dad said as he put the newspaper down. She paused as something in the paper caught her attention and she muttered, "Yeah sounds great... hey are you done with that paper?"

He shrugged and past it to her as she grabbed her plate and her mom asked, "Nancy! Where are you going?"

"Night Mom," she shouted as she slammed the door and looked down at the article.

As she continued to read it her expression went more and more grim and then completely pale.

As the night darkened, Eleven found herself amid a group of girls that she hardly recognized and tried to be friendly and feel like this was what she wanted. She didn't want to give Hopper the impression that she didn't want to be here. The only one she did know was Max, the redhead she still wasn't on good terms with.

As everyone got into bed and giggled about her strange behavior, she closed her eyes and tried again to tell herself that this was exactly what she had wanted. The storm grew louder and Max jumped and said from the top bunk, "I hope it doesn't do this the whole time we are here."

Jane ignored her and listened to the noise, finding comfort in it as she heard something rustling and sat up, wondering what it could be.

Across the camp, all lights had gone out except for a few exterior ones as the rain pelted the quaint camp. Will Byers shivered as he heard the storms, trying not to be frightened by the noise and yet staying awake as he heard each and every noise that made him jump nervously. I can do this, he thought as he imagined some strange monster moving thru the forest.

Oddly Dustin was also having the same type of nightmare, his memories of D'art flashing in his mind as he wondered where the Demodog had gone and each strange sound made him think the creature he had befriended had come back from the dead.

And Eleven was listening as well, imagining something else amid the forest coming out and standing there in the dark cabin and waiting to see what might come from the shadows. The other girls were all asleep and so didn't notice as she walked toward the noise near the back window, a looming figure moving toward them. She clenched her fists and waited to see what might happen even as the window seemed to open by itself.

The shadow crept into the cabin, and in the dim light she could see a strange face standing there staring back at her. Eleven looked at her in disbelief, the storm outside quieting the new coming girl as she entered the room and the two shared a knowing glance at each other.

Finally she stepped toward the strange girl and said the word she

dared not to ask, "Sister...?"

END OF CHAPTER ONE

11. Chapter Two, synopsis

CHAPTER TWO:

CALL OF THE WILD

While the girls struggle to keep a secret, the boys go in search of their own adventures.

Author's note: Hello everyone thank you for all the swift support! I am amazed! So glad to see so many Strangateers on here! I appreciate all the reviews and I hope this story keeps on surprising cause I have so much in store for our heroes.

12. Chapter Two prologue

The small scar on the back of her neck seemed to be especially painful in the wind as fresh air hit her and she revved the engine faster using the last bit of gas she had left to cross the bridge.

As the bike died down she settled it to the side of the road and climbed off, trying to ignore her injuries and trying to focus on what she needed to get done.

The highway seemed to stretch out infinitely in front of her as she started to walk, the pain and the anger she felt was the only thing that kept her going forward.

Occasionally a car or a large diesel rode by and she hid for a moment, not wanting any passers by to alert any authorities to a strange girl walking down the road.

Finally though it became too hard to stay on the highway as the traffic became more moderate and she turned her attention to the woods.

The gentle clouds that had been following her for nearly six hours now seemed closer as she trudged thru the woods, tossing aside her jacket and scratching her arm against a tree.

She had to keep going.

Wrapping another part of her shirt around the wound, she fiercely stared into the shadowy woods and realized that this path was definitely more treacherous.

She heard soft footsteps behind her and looked about, wondering what was on her trail and then heard a low growl.

Not wasting any time, the girl regained what little energy she had left and started running thru the woods.

The growl soon intensified as she realized something was pursuing her. From beneath the underbrush something snagged at her foot and caused her to tumble down a hill.

As she lay there for a minute catching her breath and trying to get back on her feet the noise revealed itself as a full grown male wolf. It stared at her, thinking the wounded girl to be easy prey.

But she had dealt with threats greater than this before, she thought as she closed her eyes and used her unique abilities.

In an instant the wolf found itself no longer staring at a defenseless girl but a massive mama grizzly that was terrifying even for it and the wolf rushed off into the woods.

Once the coast was clear she smirked and wiped blood from her nose, moving toward the edge of the woods again.

The road soon appeared again and she saw spotted the sign she had been looking for.

CAMP FORTUNE 6mi

Increasing her pace she moved down the road, ignoring any pain that coursed thru her body as the rain became heavier.

Kali was almost there. She was almost to her sister.

13. Chapter Two, Part One

The two girls stared at each other for a long moment in the shadows of the cabin as Eleven looked at the wounds that the darker skinned girl had across her arms and side, a thousand questions racing thru her mind.

As though to confirm she wasn't seeing an apparition she grabbed the girl's arm and looked at the tattoo, 008, and realized that this was all too real.

"What... how are you here?" Eleven asked as Kali closed the window behind her and held a finger against her lips.

"Who are you talking to?" a voice said behind the two of them and Eleven turned to see Max leaning down to look. When she glanced back at her erstwhile sister though, Kali was using her unique gifts to stay invisible from sight.

"Sorry. Go back to bed," El told the redhead.

Max gave her a weird look and then turned over to go back to sleep. The two girls standing in the shadows waited a moment as blood trickled down Kali's nostril and she muttered, "It isn't safe here."

Eleven knew she was right and grabbed her hand moving toward the door. "I saw a place on the way up here, follow me," she instructed as she ran barefoot across the grass and Kali followed.

As the two left in the middle of the night the screen door eased closed and made a soft creak. Max opened her eyes and peered down at Eleven's empty bunk, a curious look in her eyes.

Kali held onto her sister's hand as they ran across the wet grass, the storm she had made her way thru now settling down to just a gentle mist. Both of them didn't speak a word as Eleven led the way closer to the entrance of the camp. On the west side of the establishment she could make out an area that read restricted along with some construction materials which meant that it wasn't dangerous but simply not finished yet.

"In here," Eleven said tugging her toward one of the older cabins and pushing on the wooden door. It creaked and cracked as they got inside, a cloud of dust and wet mold floating aimlessly in the air as Kali sat down on an old mattress.

She could barely keep her eyes open, the stress of her long journey finally catching up with her.

Eleven looked down at her, trying to find the right first question to ask. "Sister, you're hurt," El realized.

She got down on her knees and pulled back the sleeve on Kali's right arm to look at all of the strange markings and realized they had to be needle points of some kind.

"What happened to you?" El asked in a whisper. "Someone is coming," Kali said as she closed her eyes in pain.

The curly haired girl stood up and went to the door, seeing Max race across the grass toward her and she scowled in frustration.

"Hey!" The redhead said as she caught her breath and muttered, "What the heck are you doing out here?"

El glanced inside the cabin as she carefully closed the door and remarked, "Couldn't sleep. I'm used to darker places."

Max gave her a weird look and tried to see what was inside but didn't push the issue. "I guess this place is kinda cool," Max admitted as she yawned and added, "Maybe we could use it as like a secret clubhouse."

"Maybe," El agreed.

"We better get back to bed though, Headmasters occasionally do headcount in the middle of the night," Max suggested.

El hesitated and replied, "I'll be there in a minute." The redhead shrugged and went back toward the girl's cabin as El slowly went back inside, briefly watching to be sure the annoying girl was gone.

"Mouthbreather," she muttered as she turned to see that Kali had

fallen asleep. El knelt down and looked at her sister with a sense of worry and confusion.

She searched the cabin and found a blanket, placing the old tattered quilt over the Indian girl who opened her eyes gently and muttered, "Thank you sister."

"Stay here," Eleven advised as she knew that for now the chance to ask any question would have to wait. Kali nodded quietly and closed her eyes back.

14. Chapter Two, Part Two

Morning had come quickly for Nancy back in Hawkins. She had tossed her turned all night trying not to think about the small news article she had seen, and also trying to figure out what to do about it.

She paced back and forth in the morning, a small piece of paper next to her vanity taunting her as she ran fingers thru her messy hair.

It was the number for the hunting store that Jonathan worked with.

She glanced at the clock, knowing that he would be at work by 8'oclock. She had to get in touch with him.

She grabbed the piece of paper and dashed down to the phone, glad to reach it before her long winded mother did.

She dialed it as fast as she could and held the receiver to her ear, waiting to see if anyone would answer.

Jonathan's job was to open the store in the morning. With all of the treatments that Will had to receive after his experience last year he knew that his mom would need all the extra money she could get. And the chance of child support from Lonnie was about as high as convincing a fish that it could fly.

This morning though Jonathan was nowhere near the hunting and tackle store. He had chosen to sleep in the car at the campsite, mostly because of the dreary weather which had fallen over the forested area.

And as the phone continues to ring, Nancy gave up in frustration trying to figure out what to do.

"Morning Nancy, aren't you supposed to be getting ready for that big lodge trip?" her mother asked as she headed toward the kitchen.

Nancy hadn't mentioned that the plan to head toward the lodge had all but been cancelled and she didn't answer her mom but instead waited impatiently for ten minutes to pass.

Once again the phone just endlessly rung and she sighed and ran back up to her room.

She had to talk to someone.

Quickly getting dressed and fixing her hair she went back down the stairs.

"Hey Mom can I borrow the car this morning?" she called out as she grabbed the keys near the door.

"Yeah sure sweetie, what for?" her mom asked but Nancy was already out the door. She knew that she would need to muster up some courage for what she was about to do.

Go and talk to Steve Harrington for the first time in almost six months.

Jonathan woke up around 8:30, the cramped space in the car forcing him to stretch and get out and stretch even more.

He felt a bump against his car and turned to see Will and his friends standing there, all looking at him in surprise.

"What are you still doing here?" Will asked.

"Good morning to you too," Jonathan said as he glanced at his watch and muttered, "Shit I'm late."

The four boys laughed as Jonathan jumped back into the car and started the engine. He rolled down the window and glared at Will before adding, "Remember to call Mom."

Driving off from the gravel road, he quickly shifted gears and rolled away from Camp Fortune.

Jonathan had been only working at the job for about two weeks. But already he had shown how responsible he was to the owners who always needed help around this time of year.

He sped up as he got on the highway, shifting to high gear and taking advantage of the empty road to get around corners quickly.

Even though he knew how quick the car could go he was a little cautious because of the slick roads from last night's rain. He briefly looked down and changed the radio to a different station, and then as he looked up he had to swerve unexpectedly to avoid hitting a motorcycle that had toppled over near the right side of the road.

The car lost its grip on the highway and it slid toward two parked state troopers. Jonathan clenched the wheel and felt the slippery roads push him toward the two officers and finally ease to a stop as he gripped on and felt his heart race like a drum.

He sat there for a minute catching his breath even as one of the officers moved over toward him and tapped on the window.

Jonathan rolled down the window as the officer adjusted his sunglasses and muttered, "You All right son?"

He nodded weakly as the other trooper wrote down a quick report to be sure there was no damage done to Jonathan's car.

"Just be safe and don't speed on these slick roads," The first trooper said as he passed Jonathan a citation. He said thank you and glanced at the motorcycle, wondering who could have abandoned a nice ride like that. He pulled out of the grass and waited for the traffic to clear before making his way further down the road.

About an hour later, Joyce Byers woke up with a cup of coffee and sat by the kitchen Phone, trying to act like she wasn't concerned about the type of night her son had had.

Truth be told she had a hard time last night mostly because of the storm. Will had never done well with that type of weather after he had first vanished two years ago. So when the phone rang she scrambled to answer and said, "Hello?"

"Morning Mom," Will said and she smiled nervously so relieved to hear his voice. "Hey, hey sweetie how are you?" she asked.

"Good, I wanted to hear from you before you went from work," Will answered. "I appreciate that... how did you sleep?" Joyce asked.

"Good. It rained hard," Will said as she heard a cluster of noise in the

background. "I'm so glad you are having a good time," she said even as he replied, "Okay I have to go Mom."

"Okay sweetie; I love you," Joyce replied as she hung up the phone and then went to get ready for work.

15. Chapter Two, Part Three

The mess hall at breakfast felt like a madhouse as Will got into line behind a larger boy. Grabbing a tray he nervously slid down the line, smiling in anticipation as he looked out to see where his friends had found a table near the left side.

The mess hall was one of the few places where the boys and girls were allowed to gather together, and apparently each side was excited about this and with each new arriving group the noise grew stronger and stronger.

Breakfast was a mixture of cream of wheat and some baby corn, it had a sauce that reminded Will of the type of food he was used to seeing when he had once visited his dad in Indianapolis and it smelled just as inviting.

But he was so hungry that as he sat down next to Mike he couldn't help but to dig in.

"That storm really makes this whole place stink like shit," Lucas observed as he arrived at the table. "Maybe that's you," Mike teased as their friend sat down. "Shut your pie hole, did you guys bring any rolls?" Lucas asked.

Dustin unzipped his jacket and tossed some of the fresh bread to everyone even as another group entered and they all turned to see if it was the group of girls that they knew.

"So Jonathan really slept out there all night?" Dustin asked in bewilderment. "Must have been the storm, all that rain makes it hard to drive," Will reasoned.

The boys sat there for a moment and ate their food each wondering just what the new day would hold when Mike heard a soft clamor of noise near the door and he turned to see an unexpected sight.

One of the 9th graders had dumped some cream of wheat onto a curly headed girl, and it was one that he immediately recognized.

Eleven shook her fists, glaring at the asshole that had just publicly humiliated her and was about to do something about it when she felt a hand tug her from the side.

She turned to see Mike's kind face there and he smiled at her and said, "Hey." Immediately she softened up despite looking like a total wreck and he wiped some of the food out of her hair before adding, "Come sit with us."

By the time El and Will had returned to the table, Max was also there and had apparently been smart enough to pack some crackers from home. She passed them among the group and then noticed that El was covered with food from head to toe. "Did you bring any extra clothes?" Max asked.

"I'll be fine," she lied as she sat down alongside Mike and Lucas offered her some napkins. "What are you doing here? I didn't even think I would get here let alone you!" Will said excitedly.

Before she did answer there was a sharp whistle from the front of the auditorium.

All of them turned to see the two Headmasters call the meeting to attention along with a third figure the group from Hawkins knew quite well. Hopper was the one who had whistles to get their attention and once the mess hall quieted down, he spoke.

"Okay listen up! We've got a few things to cover and I don't like repeating myself! Your Headmasters said they went over a few rules with you yesterday and I just want to repeat them to be sure you were all listening," Hopper explained as he stood on a table to get everyone's attention.

"First and foremost always stay with your group! That means that once you are out and about on a wilderness trail or near the lake that you don't wander off. Secondly, don't go anywhere after dark. There are a lot of wild animals out here," he paused as he glanced toward his adoptive daughter and added with emphasis, "Don't do anything stupid."

He climbed back down and glanced at the two rangers before

commenting, "I think that covers everything."

The Headmasters proceeded to tell them about their morning mission: the boys would be getting a tour of the north part of the lake whereas the girls would get the south.

"El, did you tell them about the place you found?" Max asked. Eleven glared at the redhead wishing she could have dropped the subject.

"What place?" Mike asked.

"It's nothing," El whispered. "Eleven found us a secret clubhouse, maybe somewhere we can meet later when we don't have so much supervision," Max explained.

"Rad," Lucas agreed.

"It's not ready yet," Eleven hastily explained.

"What do you mean?" Will asked. "Like does it have to have a makeover?" Dustin asked.

"Just give me a day," she responded as she glanced at Mike and added, "I want it to be perfect."

None of the gang pressed any further questions out of her as the groups separated and Hopper briefly noticed that his adoptive daughter had some food on her clothes.

"Did you?" He hesitated to ask but she shook her head softly not even wanting to talk about it.

Truth was she was less concerned about the humiliating event and more worried about Kali. I need to go check on her, El thought as the girls moved down the southern path with Headmaster Peters.

"Listen up everyone, I want everyone to stay in the group and pick a partner. Turn to your left and whoever is standing next to you will be your new forever friend," Peters told them.

The boys heard the same message from their Headmaster and Lucas turned to see the annoying boy from last night standing there staring

back at him.

"This is bull shit," Ned muttered to which Lucas said, "I was about to say the same thing."

"What are you doing up here?" Dustin asked the former sheriff who was leading their way.

"Nice to see you too kid," Hopper remarked dryly as they walked down the trail and added, "Who's to say I'm not just spending a little time with my girl?"

"Whatever, Eleven doesn't need you to look after her," Dustin said with a laugh as he added, "Besides you wouldn't be grabbing your holster every time you heard a noise if this was a nature trail."

Hopper paused as he looked at the curly haired kid and remarked, "When did you get to be such a smart ass?"

"Dude, I was just making small talk," Dustin said defensively. Though actually he really wasn't. Something else was on his mind. The stray Demodog that had somehow disappeared.

Was it alive and out here somewhere feasting on wild animals to survive? Or had it turned its sights to human prey again? How could it be alive after what's happened he wondered.

Before he knew it he looked up and he had fallen behind the group. "Hey guys hold on," he muttered as he raced toward them. Suddenly the leaves beneath his feet caused him to lose balance and he tumbled down the side of a hill, cursing as he did.

Once he reached the bottom, Dustin continued to curse loudly as he got up off his feet and looked at the mud that had covered his clothes. There was something else there besides mud though.

Blood.

He looked about at where he stood and saw a few stray bones lying near the tree line near by. "Holy shit," he muttered.

He called out to the others to get their attention and in a few minutes

Hopper and the other kids were on top of the scene.

"What the hell?" Ned muttered even as Hopper turned to the Headmaster and muttered, "Go on ahead with the kids."

Dustin couldn't shake the image of the scattered bones from his head as he was forced away from the site and his imagination started to run wild as he wondered what had caused such a thing to happen in these isolated woods.

16. Chapter Two, Part Four

The crowd near to the Hawk theater was already starting to grow even at 9:00 in the morning when Nancy parked her mom's car near to a lamppost on the corner of Jade and Hazel.

Some movie, *The Goonies*, was apparently the big hit of the first weekend in June. But she wasn't here to watch some fantasy film about kids and treasure. She grabbed her purse and walked inside to the main lobby where snacks and sweets were served.

Impatiently she waited until she reached the front of the line where finally the wavy haired boy running the concession stand finally noticed her.

Steve Harrington looked just about as surprised to see her as she expected and he remarked, "I didn't know you were one for movies."

"I'm here to see you," Nancy explained as she glanced back at the crowd that was still waiting to be served and muttered, "Can we talk somewhere privately?"

Steve gave her a lopsided grin and muttered, "Kinda busy here Nance. I don't get a break until 10."

"This can't wait," she said in frustration as she twisted his arm and remarked, "It's important."

Her ex-boyfriend looked at her and could tell that she was dead serious before glancing back at where the theater manager was at before saying, "Miss Margie I'll be right back."

"You taking break early Harrington," the older white woman observed as she glanced at Nancy Wheeler and added, "Just be back in fifteen."

Steve nodded and took off his hat as Nancy pulled him to the side.

"What is this all about?" He asked even as she looked about and muttered, "Don't you have a break room we can go to?"

Steve sighed, wishing that she would get on with it and led her behind the concession to the employees only area where they were finally alone.

"Look, if this is about Brittany..." he began. "What? No," Nancy paused and then sighed and said, "What made you think I cared about that? Look it doesn't matter I have to tell you something."

Steve crossed his arms and stood there for a moment as she pulled out a newspaper and passed it to him. He opened it and looked at the articles and muttered, "Okay, what is this I'm reading?"

"Last October... Jonathan and I did something really, really stupid," Nancy began. "Whoa, I don't need to hear about your sex life," Steve objected.

"Will you shut up and quit being such a man whore for one minute!" Nancy growled and then said, "This so about something else. You remember how Hawkins Labs shut their doors right?"

Harrington crossed his arms and held onto the paper before remarking, "Sure. The DOE came in after there was a little blip about Barb's death. Oh... I see. You were the little blip."

"Jonathan and I went to see a journalist... him," she said pointing at the article and now Steve got a chance to read it.

"Local conspiracy theorist Bauman dies of alcohol poisoning," Harrington read as he saw Nancy's face and he muttered, "So you are saying... the guy who helped you to bring justice for Barb... is now dead?"

"That's exactly what I'm saying," she said coldly.

"Shit," Steve said as he passed her back the paper and paced the room.

"Steve I don't know what to do, or what this even means," Nancy admitted in a scared voice.

"Oh i will tell you what it means Nancy, it's the shit storm I warned you about last year," Steve said in frustration. She was taken aback

by his brass behavior and muttered, "What?"

"Yeah, you heard me. I tried to warn you about this kind of shit," he said as he pointed toward the newspaper and added, "But you, no you couldn't leave well enough alone."

"You can't seriously be blaming this on me," Nancy said in shock.

"You just couldn't see the bigger picture Nancy, remember what Hopper told us? We needed to lay low and live normal lives! But that was never enough for you!" Steve shot back.

"Bigger picture? You're one to talk! You dropped out three months ago before graduation, like you just wanted to be a failure," Nancy remarked angrily.

"Don't go there," Steve growled and added, "I didn't want any of this shit."

He turned away from her and added, "Why aren't you having this conversation with Jonny boy anyway? Or did you just come here to hear me tell you everything is going to be okay?"

"Jonathan is out of town and this is bigger than any issues you or me are having right now, I don't know what to do," she admitted.

"Do what everyone does Nancy," he said as he walked back to her and looked her in the eyes. "Go tell the police."

She looked at him, seeing the hurt in his face as she realized he couldn't bring himself to help her and she clenched her fists even as his boss called for him to return to the front concession stand.

"You really are an idiot Steve Harrington," she muttered as she stormed out of the theater.

The day was going to be business as usual for Joyce Byers. Over the last few months she had really gotten the knack of handling the store on the corner of Berke and Wells quite nicely. Radio Shack had never exactly been her favorite cup of tea, but now the place was starting to feel like home.

The hardest part of her day wasn't dealing with customers but when she went to take a smoke break or lunch, and had to pass thru the break room.

There on the wall she always saw the smiling face of the man she loved and tried her hardest not to tear up. She missed Bob more than anything, especially now that she was seeing her boys grow and go have adventures of their own.

Around 10:30 she heard the soft jingle of the bell at the front when she had been smoking her fourth cigarette for that day and walked out to greet the customers.

The two men were dressed in suits, something that was quite uncommon in Hawkins. But she had always learned to treat each customer the same.

Walking toward the nicely dressed men Joyce also noticed that they were wearing shades, an odd choice for an especially cloudy day.

"Can I help you two gentlemen?" she asked as they looked thru some supplies.

At first they acted like they hadn't heard her so she went around to the other side of the bin and commented, "We have several of the SONY Betamax players on sale in the back, since it looks like you guys are into older electronics."

The man on the left seemed to become a bit frustrated that she wasn't leaving them alone whereas his partner commented, "How much for these transceivers?"

"Right now we got a special for small parts, two for five dollars," she said, noticing that both of them were being careful not to let their face become shown.

They got six of them altogether and paid in cash before leaving the store behind and Joyce watched them walk out into the parking lot to an unmarked dark Chevy.

Something about them made her feel nervous.

The bell rang again as she watched them back out and she grabbed her coat while the store manager walked in.

"I'm taking my lunch early Mister Gerald," she said as she walked out of Radio Shack and tried to see where they were going.

On impulse alone she ran out to her car and climbed in, revving the engine and following after the small unmarked car.

17. Chapter Two, Part Five

As the sun moved toward its apex in the sky, the wet leaves and muddy ground seemed to shine brighter, especially near the long dock where the girls were standing and peering out across the water.

Eleven felt her stomach growl softly as the Headmaster explained the rules about the lake and how to put on a life preserver. She also couldn't help but to think that Kali was likely starving as well. I need to find a way back to the cabin.

O

For the third time that day, the Headmaster explained how that portions of the campsite were still under construction. Max glanced across at El with a knowing look and she couldn't help but to roll her eyes.

The last thing she needed was that nuisance following her to Kali, she thought as the group gathered back near the shoreline.

Peters finished explaining the final rules about when and where they could swim as El spotted the boys returning, her heart fluttering slightly as she saw Mike.

But then realized that the boy looked worried about something and as the group gathered together she was about to ask what was wrong even as the two adults conversed amongst themselves.

"All right everybody listen up, we seem to have what may be a pack of stray wolves roaming near the north woods. This is a common occurrence with this area of the park so we're going to modify our rules about going out just to be safe," the man said as he gestured toward the tree line and said, "Unless you are traveling with your group or you have an adult with you, the north woods will be off limits for the time being and that includes the shore line. Deputy Hopper of the Hawkins Police Department is going to be looking into the incident to see if he can find out where the wolves' have settled so we can best avoid them. remember this woods was their home first and we need to respect that," he was saying as El turned to the group

and asked, "was it bad?"

"Looked like they might have rabies or something," Lucas confirmed. The whole gang stayed quiet as they returned to the large mess hall, each hungry from their morning stroll and undoubtedly worried about the wild animals in the area.

As they took their seats and began to feast on the fresh bread, mashed potatoes and meatloaf El couldn't help but think of how her sister was waiting for her to return. I need to think of a way to leave without being noticed, she thought as Mike and the guys were talking about the latest video games.

Just then, someone flung a scoop of the mashed potatoes over her head and it smacked the kid sitting next to Lucas on the side of the face.

At first everyone was shocked at the sudden move, but as they turned toward the other table Max spotted a taller thin dark haired girl and muttered, "Tracy Walker. I told you she would be trouble."

Lucas wiped the food off of Ned's face and then he got his own spoon and flung a scoop back causing Tracy to scream in alarm.

"Food fight!" another shouted and more chimed in as El watched and giggled softly. She knew at any moment she could use her powers to end the fight but then realized it was the chance she needed to sneak out.

Grabbing some grub and stuffing the warm food in a sack she stood up to prepare to leave and Mike asked, "El, where are you going?"

The curly haired girl looked toward the lunch line and lied, "Getting more fire power."

"Good thinking," Dustin said as he hid under the table.

El walked toward the lunch line waiting for the moment when the Headmasters decided to step in and stop the food fight to move toward the exit door. The noisy auditorium rung louder as she grabbed more food for Kali and then raced across the campgrounds.

She occasionally looked back to be sure she wasn't followed and then pushed the old cabin door open to where her erstwhile sister was waiting.

Kali opened her weary eyes and looked up at El as she sat down and passed some food and a juice box to her. She took it eagerly and muttered, "I was thinking you forgot about me out here."

"Very crowded," El explained as her sister quickly shoved down the food.

"Are you hurt?" she asked her adoptive sister to which Kali rubbed her sore muscles and answered, "I will be fine."

"It's good to see you sister," El said touching her hand softly. "I only wish the circumstances were different," Kali said and then glanced up at the door.

"Who the heck are you?" a voice said and El turned in alarm only to see that Max had indeed followed her after all.

18. Chapter Two, Part Six

Joyce Byers was likely on her fifth cigarette by the time she saw the two well dressed men leaving. She had followed them from downtown Hawkins across the railroad tracks and made certain not to follow too closely.

Although initially she wasn't certain why she felt the men were acting suspiciously in her store, that feeling of unease grew stronger when she realized where they were heading.

The unmarked car pulled into the parking lot of the small police station around 1130, having only made one other stop before hand. Joyce checked her watch as she sat out in her small car, noting that they had been inside for nearly forty five minutes. What were they doing here?

Joyce was all but certain they had to be affiliated with the government somehow and that only made her more worried as she reached for another cigarette and hoped that no one wondered why she had been parked here in the old Sears parking lot for so long.

Finally when it was almost an hour, the two men came out, she watched as they talked amongst themselves got in their car and then left. She had used up more than just her lunch break to follow them so she knew she didn't have a chance to do so now.

Instead she got out of her car and walked across the warm parking lot, her pace increasing as she felt certain there was an ulterior motive behind their arrival.

Flo looked up from her desk in surprise as Joyce stormed in and dramatically announced, "I need to speak with Mitchell."

The older woman paused as she finished typing up something and then remarked, "Hun he is about to step out for lunch break, it's going to have to wait."

She spotted the stout man walking toward her and conversing with the other officers in the precinct before remarking, "It can't wait."

She pushed past the older woman to where Phil was at, the sheriff looking at her with the same confusion.

"Good afternoon Joyce, you look like you're in a hurry," Phil commented as he adjusted his belt.

"Who were those two men who just came out of here?" She said, cutting straight to the point.

"I'm sorry... what?" Mitchell repeated to which she growled, "This is serious, Phil. Who were they?"

"First of all I'm not even sure how you know that and second you know I can't discuss police business," he muttered as he grabbed some coffee and then walked toward the door.

She followed behind him and replied, "Phil, you remember what Hopper told you we went thru two years ago with the Department of Energy? As a citizen of Hawkins I need to know if we are okay or not."

He sipped his hot beverage and stared at her as they walked out of the precinct to the open air.

"Look, I know what you went thru with your boy so I see why you're on edge every time you see government. But trust me; this was just an unofficial visit. It's actually going to boost the local economy if the city council passes the ordinance they want," he explained softly.

"What? What are you talking about?" Joyce asked.

"They're military, army or marines I can't remember. They want to reopen Fort Riverton up north, it's could really bring in some jobs for Hawkins. And I know you blame the DOE for a lot but let's face it, they brought money to this town," Mitchell replied.

"Military?" she repeated in surprise as she thought about it and muttered, "What did they come to see you for?"

"Like I said, just a friendly chat," he said with a shrug and then saw her concerned look and smiled saying, "Joyce; it's fine. Not everything is a conspiracy. We got this." He stretched and checked his

watch adding, "Now if you'll excuse me I need to go enjoy my break."

She watched him go and lit another cigarette, her mind working to try and figure out what this meant, but no answers were forming in her rattled brain.

As she walked back across the parking lot, a car pulled up to the police station and she paused to see Nancy Wheeler stepping out.

"Hey," Joyce said with a calm smile, but then asked, "What are you doing up here Nancy?"

The young girl looked worried and bit her lip nervously before answering, "I think I may need some help.."

Joyce tossed the cigarette down and muttered, "Whats the matter sweetie? Is everything okay?"

Nancy sighed as she let Jonathan's Mom into the passenger side of the car and then began to explain everything.

19. Chapter Two, Part Seven

So... you're like a stepfamily," Max concluded once El had finished explaining her connection to the weird punk chick that was sitting on the floor of the dusty cabin.

"Something like that," El agreed, knowing that she hadn't given the redhead the full story. But then again she had never anticipated this to happen.

"That's cool. I know all about that," The redhead said as she looked at the two of them and added, "Except my stepdad didn't really kidnap me. But still, I get it."

Eleven ignored her ranting as she gave her sister more food and water.

"She looks hurt," Max observed as Kali tried to sit up.

"We should tell Mike," she added to which El hastily remarked, "No!"

The redhead looked at her peculiarly and shrugged saying, "Okay okay cool it. But what are you doing here anyway?"

Kali looked at the two girls and muttered, "I came to find my sister..." then she looked directly at Eleven and asked, "How much does she know?"

"Enough," El decided, knowing that she couldn't prevent Max from being there anyway.

"Do you remember Ray?" Kali asked closing her eyes. In an instant the image of a slightly obese middle aged man appeared in the room and Max nearly fell backwards when the apparition appeared.

"Dude," The redhead said in shock as Kali smirked.

"Do you remember Jane?" Kali repeated.

"I remember," she said as images of them raiding the man's house flashed across her mind.

"You showed him mercy, Jane. And because of that..." she paused as blood trickled out of her nose.

"They found us."

The image of the middle aged man disappeared and was quickly replaced by two men in white coats and this time it was El who jumped. They reminded her of the men who took momma, the ones that had hurt her.

"Whoa wait a minute, is she talking about those psychos that gave you your powers?" Max asked nervously to which Kali nodded as the hallucination she induced faded away.

"Axel? Funshine?" Eleven asked nervously to which her adoptive sister answered calmly, "Gone... or dead. I'm not sure."

"No," she said closing her eyes and realizing that this was her fault. And Kali repeated those feelings saying, "I couldn't run from them anymore Jane. They knew my face now. And I lost everything... because of you."

"Whoa, Whoa, I'm sure that is not how it went down," Max muttered and added, "How the hell was she supposed to know those goons were still out there?"

"They took me, Jane. And began experiments on my gifts again," Kali said as she stared down at the scars on her body.

"Sister..." El said as she reached for her but Kali pulled away.

"I wanted to fight. I wanted to stop. But I couldn't. They kept poking, kept prodding. Like I was an animal."

"But... you escaped right? That's how you got here," Max realized.

"I watched. Waited. I knew I had to leave before they finished me off. Before I became nothing but a number again," she said bitterly as she nodded weakly and added, "So I did. I escaped the first chance I got."

"How did you find me?" Eleven asked.

"As they tortured me; I began to realize my gifts were growing... I was becoming stronger," she paused as she grabbed Eleven and added, "It isn't safe here."

"What?" Max said becoming scared by the wild way the girl talked.

Before Kali could continue there was a knock on the door and the redhead turned and said, "It's Mike and the others! What do I do?"

"Distract them," the punk chick told her. El nodded in agreement and Max sighed before remarking, " You're gonna have to tell him sometime."

Eleven glared at her for a minute and the redhead walked out of the cabin.

The sisters listened as Will and the boys talked to her.

"Hey; we were wondering where you guys went," Mike explained.

"Hey, Yeah. Ummm El wanted me to help with the clubhouse," Max answered.

"We can help too," Lucas offered.

"No! Listen, umm this is embarrassing..." Max said trying to think of a lie.

"What? What is it?" Will asked.

"It was supposed to be a surprise for you guys. I didn't mean to spill the beans earlier..." Max said and then added, "Hey, maybe we can go for a swim?"

"A swim? The Headmasters said that the lake was off limits right now," Dustin muttered.

"Oh come on, one swim won't hurt," the redhead teased.

"Yea, yea maybe she's right," Lucas agreed.

"Oh shut it doofus. You agree to anything she says," Dustin muttered.

Eleven sighed knowing that the boys would eventually give in and turned her attention back to Kali.

"What do you mean that it isn't safe?" she asked softly.

"There was something else, I think- I think they wanted me to get stronger," Kali whispered as she tearfully grabbed her sister and added, "Something terrible is coming."

20. Chapter Two, Part Eight

Max wasn't sure exactly how she had convinced the boys to join her at the lake, but as they all stood there together on the dock she couldn't help but to admit the cool shining water did look inviting especially as the afternoon continued to warm up.

Lucas was the first to be brave enough to take off his shirt. He smiled broadly at her and then turned to his friends and called out, "Come on guys. Last one in is a rotten egg!"

She giggled softly as he raced toward the edge of the dock and then grabbed his feet and leapt straight out into the water splashing all of them. Will and Mike exchanged a smirk amongst themselves and then went ahead and took off their shoes and shirts as well.

Max tied up her hair, looking at Dustin who was still standing next to the shoreline unsure and remarked, "Come on, nobody is going to come out here right now!"

"I don't know about this you guys," he admitted even as Mike and Will joined Lucas in the water. "Come on Dustin, don't be a pussy," Lucas shouted out.

"Look I cant swim okay?" the curly haired boy said defensively. Max looked at him sadly and then remarked, "Hey, it's ok. I can teach you." "Really?" he asked in surprise to which she nodded and encouraged him to take his first tentative steps into the cool lake.

At the same time, Eleven was helping find her sister some new clothes. She had snuck back across to the girl's cabin for just such a reason, searching for someone that appeared to be about the same size as Kali.

Tracy Walker, mouthbreaker, she thought as she looked thru the girl's things. Racing back across the campsite, she heard a soft howl somewhere out in the woods and then picked up the pace.

It actually had been Mike howling like a wolf, the other boys joining in as they started to play in the water and enjoy themselves. Dustin

smiled nervously as he was slowly guided by Max into the water until he got it to his waist.

"I think that's deep enough," she said and then encouraged him to try and move a little on his own.

Eleven entered the cabin and gave her sister the clothes, crossing her arms as she waited for Kali to finish what she had to tell her. When it seemed like forever, she finally broke the silence and asked, "What did you mean... something terrible was coming?"

The punk chick tossed aside her ragged clothes and looked at her sister with blood shot eyes. "They didn't want to simply understand my powers, Jane. They wanted me to grow stronger," she explained as she slipped on the larger shirt.

"Stronger?" Eleven repeated.

"Like you, to be able to see things without being there... to find out more for them," Kali explained as she added fearfully, "They wouldn't stop until I could find you."

"Me?" she said in surprise.

The boys continued to laugh and hoot playfully as Dustin seemed to get the hang of it. Then they all paused as they heard footsteps approaching. "Quick! Hide!" Lucas shouted. Dustin rushed back to the shoreline as Max grabbed Will's hand and they swam further into the lake where a large rock jutted from the water.

From amid the tree line a shadowy figure emerged, for a moment Dustin almost thought it might be the Demodog returned to finish them off. But it was Hopper.

"What the hell are you kids doing out here?"

"They wanted me to find you, Jane. I think... I think that was their goal all along," Kali explained.

"Papa...?" Eleven asked as she tried to hide her anxiety, knowing what those men had done to her in the past.

"Men like him, men who see as nothing but a means to an end," Kali explained as she shivered and added, "But... there was something else... something they wanted me to do..."

Hopper glared at Lucas, Mike and Dustin as the boys bowed their heads in shame and he crossed his arms, commenting, "So where's the rest of your posse?"

"They didn't come," Lucas said quickly even as Max and Will clung to the rock out of sight.

"Hmm, sure," Hopper remarked dryly as he gestured for them to head toward camp and added, "Get inside and go clean up, you little shitheads. I don't want to see you out here again."

The three exchanged a worried glance and then ran toward the campsite as Hopper gazed out at the water and wondered how the kids could continue to be so stupid.

"I didn't want to... They made me get in the tank again," Kali said as she teared up and muttered, "They said... they wanted me to find something for them."

"Another one of us?" Eleven guessed but Kali shook her head negatively and responded, "The man in charge called it a gate..." immediately her sister's face went pale.

"You... know what that is don't you," Kali guessed.

"Papa... we found it by accident, two years ago," Eleven answered.

"This time... it was no accident," Kali responded.

"Hey, quit touching my leg, it tickles," Will said pushing Max away as they waited for the coast to be clear. "Relax weirdo I wouldn't do that anyways. Come on, we better get to shore," the redhead suggested as she started to swim back. "Okay, gimme a second. I want to just get in a few laps, it's been ages since I have swam," Will said with a fresh smile.

"Whatever," Max said with a shrug as she swam back toward the coast and started to dry off.

Will laughed and began to swim around the rock, enjoying the summer breeze.

"I felt... cold. It was so so dark,"Kali started to say as she stared off into space and Eleven crept closer. "Sister, tell me. Did you open it?" Eleven asked grabbing her.

She nodded meekly, trying not to cry. "There was something there, Jane. Something evil and ancient. Cold and intelligent," the dark skinned girl said as she shook uncontrollably.

Eleven held her down. "The Shadow Monster?"she whispered, daring not to speak the creatures name.

"I don't know... it was so powerful. It... it wanted something..." Kali turned to her sister and cried out, "I think it's coming for you!"

Will felt something against his foot again as he frowned and looked about and toward the dock. Max had already started toward the tree line and he decided it was time for him to go in as well. He started to swim toward the dock, unsure of what he had felt and then felt something slide against his skin.

He stopped for a moment as it started to tug at his leg, then cried out in alarm when it would not release its grip. He looked toward the empty tree line, feeling the grip of the water grow tighter around his leg and tried with all his might to escape.

Then the strange feeling seemed to grow stronger and he realized he was sinking into the lake. In a matter of seconds, the water was calm again and Will was tugged under into the darkness beneath.

END OF CHAPTER TWO

21. Chapter Three, synopsis

CHAPTER THREE:

UNDERTOW

A harrowing incident brings everyone together, and for one among the group their summer vacation may be at an end.

Author's note: Once again I want to thank you for every single review and every positive feedback and follower I am getting for this story. I hope everyone is satisfied with where this is going and what is to come, are there any characters you feel aren't getting enough screen time? Or that you want less screen time? Lol. Just wanted everyone to know this experience is amazing for me and that I want to keep it going!

22. Chapter Three, Prologue

Evening settled over Lake Fortune, and it was so easy to simply overlook the small things.

The crickets began to chirp gently, the dragonflies buzzed across the water, and as the sun started to cast an orange glow across the lake one might even overlook the still form of a young boy lying face down in the water.

Jim Hopper was walking amid the woods, still searching for any signs of the wolves that might have ripped apart an unfortunate deer earlier in the day and he couldn't help but to consider giving up for the night.

He sighed, wondering again what he was even doing out here and then lit up a cigarette as the wind gently picked up. Might be another storm tonight be thought as he started walking back toward the way he had come.

He found his way to the shoreline, holding his hand over his mouth to keep the cigarette lit and then glanced toward the water and saw something truly frightening.

He dropped his cigarette as his eyes widened in shock and then muttered, "Jesus Christ!"

Taking off his coat and then quickly unbuttoning his shirt the former sheriff dived quickly into the water straight towards the prone figure of Will Byers.

Nothing could be heard in the evening air save for the noise of his hands smashing against the lake surface while he frantically reached Will.

This is exactly why I told these damn kids to stay away from here, he thought as he grabbed ahold of Will and tugged him straight at his chest.

It was clear from the way the kid had been floating that he as

unconscious and Hopper knew his first priority would be to get him to the shoreline.

He placed the kid carefully over his right shoulder as he looked about the calm waters and wondered how the hell Will had even gotten hurt.

Time for that later, he thought as he swam quick as possible to where the waves splashed gently against the muddy shore. Placing Byers down on the wet ground, he started to perform CPR on him, pushing heavily against his chest to force any water out of his lungs.

"Come on Will, come on," Hopper shouted to the unconscious boy as w struggled to find any signs of response from him.

When there was still nothing Hopper checked for a pulse and sighed deeply relieved to know the boy was still alive.

Again he tried to administer CPR, feeling something tight in Will's chest he tried several compressions but to no avail.

When he looked up again he saw a wide eyed redhead staring down at him and the girl asked, "What's wrong with him?"

"Help me carry him," Hopper ordered her as he lay Will's body straight. She grabbed his shoulders and the former sheriff took Will's feet.

"Ready? One, two, three!" Hopper called out as they lifted together.

"Come on, we have to get him to the clinic," Hopper explained as they bounded toward the treeline.

Behind them, in the calm waters, something stirred just beneath the surface and watched them leave. It circled the dark undercurrents of the lake, eager for its next victim.

23. Chapter Three, Part One

Steve Harrington was an idiot.

He felt more and more certain of this fact as the end of his shift drew near and he replayed the conversation he had with Nancy in his brain.

He hadn't meant to be so rude. He hadn't really wanted for her to storm off like that.

The truth was that Steve had a lot more going on in his life than any body knew, and he wasn't so good at pretending not to care. That act was starting to get real old real quick.

It had all started when Nancy broke up with him. Or he broke up with Nancy, either way he felt as though he lost his mojo ever since.

First he was replaced on the basketball team by New all star Billy Hargrove. Then when he was sure Nancy was going to leave Jonathan over Christmas break he saw them at the skating rink together.

As spring approached, Steve had begun to wonder where his entire life was headed since graduation was growing so close and he hadn't been any closer to finding a college to get into.

Then like a ton of bricks during March his dad announced that his business had gone completely bankrupt and he found himself having no other choice but to start picking up slack in order to help out. He even had been at school working to paint the bleachers for some extra cash that day he saw Nancy.

Steve had been used to a certain lifestyle, the fancy cars and the sleek hairdo. So when the money wasn't available to do those things he found himself gravitating towards other kids who did have money. That was when he met Brittany.

although his heart still belonged to Nancy Wheeler, the tall blonde that owned a red Ford was a welcome distraction especially when

Steve's dad had filed for divorce and he was unable to complete the last semester of his senior year.

So he had spent the last two months desperately trying to find ways to rekindle what it meant to be a kid for him by taking a few recreational drugs; partying a little too hard and earning as much cash as possible here at the theater.

As his shift came to an end though, his mind continued to gravitate toward Nancy and how he wanted to make up to her. He knew that there was a reason she had come to him, more than just wanting to talk about the concerning news she had uncovered.

Something still existed between them, and Steve felt certain that he could bring it back to life if he tried hard enough.

The rest of the work day for Joyce had also seemed to drag by especially whenever she kept thinking about everything that Nancy had told her.

First she felt proud that her son had the guts to expose Hawkins Lab for what they had been involved with. The entire town had felt a lot safer once the building had been quarantined by the Indiana Army Reserve.

But now that she had been told the horrifying news about a stranger being found dead in upstate Indiana, she wasn't sure what to make of it.

She waited near the kitchen telephone trying to force it to ring so she could be reassured that Will was okay, and yet nothing ever came thru. She wished to heck that she had thought to find out what the number was for the ranger's office at the lake, but somehow Jonathan had convinced her everything would be just fine.

It was a mantra she kept repeating in her head as she sat there and tried to eat a leftover casserole. Everything will be just fine. Everything will be just fine.

Then, when she was about to give up, the phone rang. She scrambled to answer it and called out, "Will? Is that you?"

"Hey Joyce, sorry to call you so late," Sheriff Mitchell said and she frowned and remarked, "Damn it Phil what is it?"

"You know after we talked this afternoon you got me thinking, and I was just curious, why exactly did you and Hopper have such a hostile toward those folks from the DOE years ago?" Phil asked

"Phil, look we can talk another time. I'm expecting another call," she said avoiding the inquiry.

"See, I did a little digging into the records and it looks like Hop was rubbing shoulders with those people up in Hawkins Lab from time to time. Did you know anything about that?" Mitchell said ignoring her complaint.

"Phil, what exactly are you trying to get at?" she said tiredly.

"Nothin'. Just asking questions. I figured I could ring Hop and see what he knew about the situation to clear it up but he must not be home. You happen to know where he is?" Mitchell inquired.

"No. Is that all?"

"Yeah, sure. Sorry to interrupt your night."

As the phone call ended she slammed it against the receiver and grabbed her keys.

She was sick and tired of being left in the dark.

Ten minutes later after she left the house, the phone rang again. This time it was one she should not have missed.

Up on route 56, Jonathan was just placing the closing sign up for the night when he heard the store phone ring and he quickly unlocked it to see if it was Nancy. He hadn't heard from her all day.

"Hello?" He asked as he picked up the phone.

"Yes is Jonathan Byers there?"

"This is he, who is this?" He replied as he leaned against the counter.

"This is Headmaster Susan Peters over at Lake Fortune. You dropped your brother off yesterday evening..."

"Yeah that's right. Is everything okay?" Jonathan muttered.

"We tried to get ahold of your mother. This was the next emergency contact number..."

"What's happened? Is Will okay?"

There was a pause that seemed to last an eternity and then the ranger replied, "How soon can you get here?"

Brittany was supposed to pick Steve up about fifteen minutes or so after his shift has come to an end. Steve had waited thirty and then decided to make the long walk home.

Brittany had been trying to get him more involved with drugs than he cared to admit, so partially he was thankful that he didn't have to see her tonight.

When he got to his house Steve immediately saw an unfamiliar car parked in the driveway along with a van that had a strange looking symbol etched on the side like a logo for something.

Running inside he spotted his mom sitting in the living room offering two well dressed men some coffee. All of them turned their attention to Steve as he entered the room.

"Hey Mom... is everything okay?" He asked softly as the men seemed to size him up.

"Oh sweetie there you are! These nice gentlemen are with the Army Reserve," she explained in a polite but worried tone.

A third man walked out from the kitchen carrying a glass of lemonade in his right hand. He was a tall African American man with an Afro to rival any hip hop star and wore a white lab coat eerily similar to the ones that he had seen at Hawkins Lab.

The man smiled as he took a sip of his lemonade and then remarked, "You must be Steve. Your momma was kind enough to invite us in

while we were waiting."

He paused and passed the glass to one of his men as he looked over at Steve's worried Mom and said, "Missus Harrington, if it's all right can we have a word with Steve alone?"

The older woman nodded and gathered the trays before smiling again cordially and leaving the room.

The two well dressed men stood in the doorway as Steve looked at them all with a bit of nervousness in his eyes.

"Take a seat, young man," the man in the white coat said, "We have a lot to talk about."

24. Chapter Three, Part Two

There was only one doctor for the entire camp, an older obese gentleman named Carl Danner who according to Roberts was something of an old army vet from WWII. Hopper didn't really care about the man's history, just as long as they did something for Will.

They had gotten the boy up on an examination table in the clinic and put started the necessary steps to try and revive them the same way that the former sheriff had. One thing was for certain though, Will still had a pulse but he was not waking up.

The redhead that had helped Hopper carry him all the way to the clinic stood in the door and shuffled her feet nervously. Hopper glanced at her and crossed his arms before remarking, "Hey, you don't have to be here. Go get some sleep kid."

Max gave him an ugly look and then sighed, stepping out of the clinic and realizing that she had to go tell the others right away. The first one that came to her mind was Eleven.

If anybody can help Will, it's her, she thought. Racing across the darkening ground, she wasted no time getting to the abandoned cabin where El was still tending to her wounded sister, alarming them both as she slammed into the dusty old building.

"Jesus," Kali muttered as Max caught her breathe. "Something's happened," she muttered in between her gasping. "What?" El asked trying to get the girl to spit it out.

"Will, he- I think he almost drowned in the lake," Max explained. El's face grew grim as she shared an unspoken glance at Kali and then said, "Where is he now?"

"Your stepdad as I took him to the clinic. I don't know what's wrong with him," she said worriedly.

Eleven looked at her sister who nodded and said, "Go. I'm starting to regain my strength. So I will be just fine."

The curly haired girl grabbed her erstwhile sister's hand and then turned to Max and said, "Take me to him."

Max nodded and the two moved back across the campground, Eleven's thoughts swirling into a frenzy as she thought of what Kali had told her.

The gate.

Bad men.

An ancient evil.

Did it connect to Will?

She hadn't even noticed that Max was saying something as they arrived at the ranger's cabin.

"We have to tell Mike and the others now, this is serious," The redhead insisted.

Eleven bit her lip, not wanting to betray her sister's trust but then nodded and said, "Okay. Go wake them up."

Max left to find the boys as Eleven stepped into the ranger's office where Hopper and Roberts were talking.

"Hey, What are you doing up?" her adoptive dad asked.

"Will. What's happened to him?" El asked. He frowned and sighed before muttering, "Kid. It's nothing you need to worry about. The doc is working on him now."

"Maybe I can help?" she suggested. The ranger looked at her curiously and then Hopper laughed and said, "Let me talk with my daughter just for a second."

Pulling the curly haired girl outside Hopper glared at her and said, "Whats gotten into you? Are you insane? I told you no powers. Will probably just got a little water in his lungs."

"But it could be something else," she insisted, wishing she could

explain what she knew to him. "Look. I know you like to play the hero. But now isn't the time. If you really want to help Will then go keep his friends occupied. I'm sure they are probably already aware of what's going on the way that loudmouth spreads gossip," Hopper replied dryly.

"But..." she tried to object to which he turned her about and remarked, "Will is going to be just fine. You came here to have a good time at camp. So why don't you go do that?"

She glared at him, wishing she wasn't being treated like a child and then stormed off. She knew there had to be a way to fix this.

The boys were all groggily standing out on the cabin porch when she arrived, none of them really sure of what to make of what Max had told them.

"El, what's going on?" Mike asked.

"It's Will, he's in trouble," she explained softly.

"Is this about the Upside Down?" Lucas asked nervously.

"I don't know," she admitted.

"What the hell?" Mike said in a whisper.

"This can't be happening," Dustin said with a heavy cough. "Maybe you got it wrong?" Lucas asked to which El said, "No. this is really happening guys."

"How could you keep this from us?" Mike asked in shock as he muttered and shook his head, "From me."

"I didn't have a choice," El tried to say even as Mike growled, "Friends don't lie!"

He stormed off and El followed behind as the others stared at each other uncertainly. "What do we do now?" Lucas asked.

"Mike shouldn't be so hard on her," Dustin muttered. "Dude, she broke the code," Lucas said.

Dustin looked down at the ground and then admitted, "Yeah well... she wasn't the only one."

Max blinked for a second and then asked, "What are you talking about?"

25. Chapter Three, Part Three

The first thing she noticed was Hopper's car was nowhere to be seen.

In fact the way things looked, Hopper and his adoptive daughter hadn't spent very long here at the remote cabin, Joyce thought as she walked up to the porch.

"Hopper?" she called out hopefully. The sun had just set and darkness was now the norm amid the shadowy woods. This area always reminded her of those grim days when Will was missing.

Thru it all Joyce had been convinced her son was still alive, and fought against almost everyone to prove that. Now, she wasn't exactly sure if something sinister was in the works or not or if she was simply missing her son.

The door to the cabin wasn't properly latched, meaning that Hopper must have decided to leave abruptly she thought as she stepped into the dusty cabin.

She didn't really blame him for not doing much with the place. With all the time they spent in Indianapolis, the small family hadn't really much time to call this place a Home.

As she looked about the cabin for any clues regarding where Hopper might've gone, she reflected on the conversation she had just had with the new sheriff.

Phil was just doing his job, but she still felt that he was getting in over his head. Especially with these new military folks running around Hawkins.

She sighed in frustration, unsure of where to look next and feeling like so many people were keeping her out of the loop.

Then she saw a sticky note on the fridge, larger than any other reminder that was there and it read:

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.

And below that was a number that she was sure was for the state Capitol. She glanced at the phone and then dialed the number, wondering who might pick up.

"Hello?" a voice said that sounded vaguely familiar.

"This is, this is Joyce Byers. I'm a friend of Jim's," she explained softly.

There was a long pause and then the male voice replied, "Yes Missus Byers. I remember you."

She tightened her grip around the phone and muttered softly, "Doctor Owens?"

The older man chuckled softly and said, "Was there something I could help you with Missus Byers?"

It was almost eight o'clock and Nancy had spent the entire evening feeling queasy and worried about the newspaper article that she had shown Joyce and then also the information she'd gotten about the sudden arrival of some suspicious men in Hawkins.

There had been a busy signal when she tried to call Jonathan again at the store and then she figured he must have already left work. Making her feel more alone and more stressed than usual, so that any little sound made her jump.

A little tap against her window made Nancy sit up in her bed and then look toward it, wondering if she was imagining things.

Then she heard it again and walked over to the window and opened it to find Steve Harrington staring up at her second story room. He had a few rocks in his hand that he had used to get her attention and he smiled softly at her as Nancy sighed.

"What do you want?" she asked angrily.

"That's a fine way to greet someone that came to apologize," Steve called out.

She rolled her eyes and replied, "All right. You apologized. Good

night Steve."

She was just about to close her window back as he hastily called back, "Nancy! Nancy wait a minute! I came to help!"

She paused and stuck her head out the window again before asking, "What are you talking about?"

"That's why you came by the movie theater earlier right?" Steve replied.

"I think you made it clear you didn't really care what I had to say," Nancy growled back.

"Like I said, this is an apology. Can you come down and talk?" Steve answered. She glanced inside at her room and muttered, "My parents would kill me if they found out I snuck out. Especially if they knew it was you."

Harrington frowned and then sighed and said, "Listen, you want to make up to Jon Jon, right? I can help you out. So do you want that or not?"

She sighed, realizing that she hadn't expected this sort of response from Steve. But then she also wasn't entirely sure what to expect from him.

She climbed out onto her roof and then he positioned himself to help her get down. She slid against the edge and then took a leap, tumbling onto the grass on top of Steve.

They stared at each other for a brief moment and then Nancy got off of him and fixed her hair.

"So, how do you plan to get out to route 56 anyway? I thought you didn't have a car."

"I don't, but I can borrow someone's," he responded and she glared at him and snapped, "I don't want to see that skanky girlfriend of yours."

Steve looked at her like he wanted to say something smart back and then growled, "I have an idea, it's not Brittany. But I don't think

you're going to like it either way."

26. Chapter Three, Part Four

Danner had not seen anything like it before. As he stared at the x-rays he had managed to get of the young boy's chest, he wondered if his equipment was malfunctioning or if he was really seeing something unbelievable.

Jim Hopper walked into the small office that was only a few steps away from the room where Will Byers still lay unconscious and crossed his hands, waiting for the doctor to say something to explain what was happening to the kid.

Carl reached for a donut, feeling like he needs a little extra energy as the night wore on and muttered, "Pleural effusion. He's got a large amount of fluids in his lungs. He almost drowned."

"Jesus," Hopper muttered as he looked at the scans and said, "There's a ton. He was only in the water for a few minutes!"

"That Lake is really dirty, Deputy. Could be some dirt in his lungs too, look how dark these blotches are," Carl said pointing toward the spots on the scan that he couldn't quite make out.

"Okay, so how do we help him?" Hopper asked.

"Good question," Danner agreed as he gestured toward the first aide materials that had in stock and added, "We're not exactly equipped to handle this."

Hopper glared at him and muttered, "Well you can't just-"

Before he finished the sentence there was a tap on the door and he opened it to see the Headmaster arriving alongside Jonathan Byers.

"Where's my brother?" Jonathan asked anxiously as the doctor got up and positioned himself in front of the clinic door. "Relax now son, we are doing all we can right now," Danner explained.

"Ambulance is on the way," Roberts chimes in. Hopper glared at both of them, a crackle of thunder startling all of them as he peered thru the blinds and saw the rain had started to come down over the night

sky.

"Well they better hurry, this storm is getting real bad," Jim murmured.

Rain hit the back of El's neck as she followed Mike thru the woods, trying to call out to him but still he refused to listen to her pleas. Finally, after what seemed like forever they had gone deep in the woods and Mike turned to confront her.

"I wasn't trying to hide it from you," Eleven explained softly. The young boy still looked hurt over the secret she had kept and slumped against a tree muttering, "We could have helped you. That's what friends do."

She looked down at the ground and slid her hands in her pockets as they stood there silently and finally she muttered, "You're right. I'm sorry."

Mike kicked a stone and shrugged, "Whats done is done."

El slowly reached for his hand and the two stood there for a moment holding each other's palms before Eleven said, "We can't fight right now. We need to help Will."

A crackle of thunder boomed louder overhead as the two hid under the massive oak tree and the storm grew more intense.

Mike wrapped his arms around her to keep her safe, saying nothing for the moment and then together they dashed back toward the campsite.

Jonathan finally had a chance to look at the unconscious form of his brother lying on the clinic slab and he tried not to cry. He knew that this was his fault for insisting that they come out to this stupid camp anyway.

"We can't just sit here and do nothing!" He shouted as he squeezed Will's hand and looked toward all the adults who seemed to be standing around uncertainly.

"Look kid I agree, but this is the doc's call. There is no way to get that

fluid off his lungs safely," Hopper explained.

"This is bull shit," Jonathan said kicking a random trash bin over.

"Let me see if I can check to find out how far out they are on the walkie-talkie," The robust ranger said as he left the room.

Hopper and Jonathan stood alone in the clinic as he stared down at his unconscious brother and wished there was something he could do.

He clenched his fists and then raced toward the supply cabinet as Hopper muttered, "What the hell?"

He grabbed several long metal brooms and mops and wedged them in the door even as the doctor on the outside saw what was happening.

"Hey! Hopper open this door right now!" Danner growled as Jonathan made it as tightly sealed as possible and turned to the old sheriff before commenting, "You going to help me or what?"

Across the stormy campgrounds, Lucas and Dustin's argument was beginning to get heated even as the rain hit the boy's cabin with stronger force.

"How the hell could you put a Demogorgon on ice?" Lucas shouted.

"It was for science," Dustin objected.

"What the heck is wrong with you? How could you be so stupid," his friend growled angrily.

"Dude it was dead! I didn't exactly expect it to pull a Reanimator on me!" Dustin shouted back as he took a few steps into the cabin.

"Guys," Max muttered as she saw several of the boys inside starting to stir awake.

"It's from another dimension you dipshit, the laws of our universe don't even apply to it!" Lucas said pushing him back.

"Guys just calm down," Max insisted even as Dustin got an angry

glare on his face and pushed Lucas back.

"I'm sick and tired of your attitude man! You are always treating me like shit!" Dustin yelled back.

Now several of the boys were fully awake looking down at the two as they bickered.

"Well maybe it would be easy if you didn't act like a freaking idiot sometimes!" Lucas shouted.

Dustin had had enough and clenched his fists, and then slammed his friend right on the jaw.

"Fight!" a boy above said as the others started to wake and see the brawl begin.

Hopper watched as Jonathan grabbed the medical kit and then shined a light on Will's chest, glancing at the x-ray.

"Kid What the fuck are you doing?" He asked, uncertain why he was letting this even happen.

Jonathan had taken out some scalpels and graze along with a small plastic straw from the doctor's thermos nearby and started to wrap gauze around the straw.

"I saw this in a survival guide m once, we have to poke a hole in his chest cavity and then we can drain out the fluid," he explained as he kept second guessing as to where to put the incision.

"What? That's insane," Hopper muttered to which Jonathan shot back, "Do you have a better idea?"

A slamming noise on the clinic door made the former sheriff jump and he looked back to see Doctor Danner glaring at him.

"Jim! You need to open this door before the ranger's get back or I swear to god!" Danner shouted.

Hopper turned to Jonathan and muttered, "Look, whatever you're going to do you better do it fast."

"Yeah Okay one second," the old sheriff shouted as Danner kept struggling to get the door open.

Jonathan took a deep breath and cut an incision where he felt the makeshift tube could pierce straight thru and then held it over Will's chest, and plunged it straight down.

The tube went straight into his lung and Jonathan said, "Quick! Turn him over on the side."

Hopper helped and they pushed Will over on the right side of the table as Jonathan pushed hard on the boy's chest.

"Come on Will!" he said as he as he felt something coming up.

The boy's chest heaved and he spasmed and Hopper looked down at the small tube that Jonathan had inserted to see an oozing greenish slime seeping out of the end.

"Keep him propped up like that," Hopper said as more of the sludge dripped out.

"What the hell?" he muttered as more of the strange substance came out but still Will was not coming back to consciousness.

"Why isn't this working?" Jonathan muttered as he kept beating on his brother's chest. "Get that door open," the old sheriff said as he grabbed a nearby dish and scooped up some of the mucus looking slime. As the doctor came in, Danner glared at them both and muttered, "I don't know what the hell you two were thinking!"

"Can I use your phone doc?" Hopper said ignoring the man's irate manner.

"What? After this little stunt be glad I don't get your badge taken away!" Carl muttered as Hopper pushed past him to the Phone.

Behind him on the table, next to Will's still form, the green slime in the dish seemed to throb soft and slow.

Almost like it had a heartbeat.

27. Chapter Three, Part Five

Doctor Sam Owens sat in a small cafe just outside of the roads that led to Hawkins. It was a little hole in the wall that only had one thing good for it: twenty-four hour service.

Outside he heard the storm rattling against the diner and he briefly wondered if the person who had called him would even show up.

Just as he was checking his watch again the bell above the diner door rang and he smiled from ear to ear as the sorely drenched middle aged woman sat down.

Joyce Byers eagerly accepted a cup of coffee from the waitress as Sam looked at her shaky hands and muttered, "You look terrible Joyce."

"Hopper told me that you died the same night as Bob," she muttered as she took the warm drink and sipped it slowly.

"He isn't wrong. Not really anyway. So don't get mad at him. It was for the best," Owens responded.

"You said you knew something about these military types," Joyce said getting to the point of why she had driven out here in the middle of the night.

"You have your son and his girl to thank for their arrival in your little town," Sam said to which she asked, "What do you mean by that?"

"We had everything taken care of. After Brenner was gone we were handling things the way they were meant to be handled. We helped a lot of people," Sam explained.

"While you were busy helping people, good people also died," she growled.

"Look, I never said we were perfect. But it kept prying eyes from turning their attention to Hawkins."

"So you're trying to tell me this is our fault?" she asked incredulously.

"What I'm saying is that you shouldn't expect this to be all over just because the lab shut it's doors," Sam explained softly as he leaned forward and added, "Once the cat is out of the bag it's hard to put it back, you know?"

"What do they want?" Joyce asked nervously. Before he could respond the doctor felt his pager buzz excitedly and he paused to look down at the number.

"Hold that thought," he replied as he walked over to the counter and asked to use their phone.

Joyce looked about the empty diner and then toward the raging storm inside, wishing to goodness that she could just stop worrying about this strange set of circumstances. The music that played in the diner was smooth jazz and combined with the rain it did make her feel a little more calm.

When Doctor Owens returned he wore a serious look on his face and he muttered, "Is your car good on roads in this weather?"

"I don't know, not really. Why? Who was that?" Joyce asked noting his worried tone.

"We can use mine then. We need to get to Lake Fortune right away," he explained as he grabbed his coat and added, "It's Will."

Her eyes widened in alarm as they pushed out to the rain and she grabbed the keys and said, "I'll drive."

The quarry that ran near the east side of Hawkins looked like a graveyard at night save for the barrels of fire that burned near some of the makeshift tents that ran along the outside. The storm was just on the outskirts of Hawkins hitting the forest to the north where the county line ended but Nancy could still smell the air and knew it would be an intense one.

She shivered as her and Steve climbed off of their bikes and the teenagers that tended to hang out here in this grimy place all turned their attention to the newcomers.

Nancy felt even more sick when she recognized the red ford parked

off the side of the road.

"I thought you said Brittany wouldn't be here," she muttered as she saw the blonde who apparently was hanging off another dude.

"I said we didn't come for her. We came to catch a ride," Steve explained as he spotted the old car he used to drive. He still couldn't believe that he has lost it in a stupid street race.

From beneath one of the small awnings that had propped up against the piles of dirt, a shabby looking teenage boy stood up and lit a cigarette.

"Well well Well, look what the pussy cat dragged in. Queen Steve and his royal slut," the boy said and Nancy frowned up at the stench that Billy Hargrove had around him.

"Steve this is a bad idea," Nancy said tugging for them to leave. She didn't even know why she had agreed to this in the first place. As desperately as she needed a ride she knew anything from Billy came with a price.

"Listen, I can handle this," Harrington said as Billy took a step closer and the tossed his lit cigarette toward Steve's feet.

"No need to worry princess, Stevie and I are tight now isn't that right?" Billy said as he placed an arm around the other boy's shoulder and added, "I been fixing him up with the good stuff for a few months now."

"I'm not here for that," Steve replied as his hand twitched nervously.

"Spit it out then Steve, what do you need?" Billy asked to which Nancy again tried to tug at them to leave and her ex answered, "You told me before you and your gang have had trouble with the law out here. Well, I know a spot where you can hang and no questions asked."

"Is that so?" Billy asked as he glanced at Nancy and remarked, "is that where you come in?"

"My uncle owns a lodge near the east side of Lake Fortune. A lot of

people don't even know it's there. It's remote, and I can get as many people in as I want," she answered meekly.

"Lake Fortune? That's like six miles from here," Billy said suspiciously.

"Her boyfriend originally intended to take her. But there was a bit of a falling out..." Steve paused and added, "She was looking to unwind a bit up there. I figured you would appreciate an invite."

Billy smirked and crossed his arms before snickering, "So you and the freak are having problems? I imagine that's common with a pencil dick."

"I'm sure you would know," Nancy snapped back.

"Ouch! Kitty has claws!" Billy said with a wild laugh and then looked up at the dark sky and muttered, "So what? You want to go tonight and party like there's no tomorrow?"

"The sooner the better," Steve muttered.

The thuggish boy howled as he pat Steve's back and added, "I got to hand it to you Steve. This is a tempting offer. But how do I really know that fancy Nancy is down to party?"

Hargrove paused as one of his gang members passed a rolled up smoke of weed and then passed it toward Nancy.

"Maybe you can show us your wild side right here," Billy suggested.

For a long moment the whole group waited to see what Nancy would do and then much to all their surprise she took it and inhaled it all in quickly.

She coughed hard as she tried not to gag and Billy growled wildly before staying, "That is what I'm talking about! Harrington I still don't know how you let her go."

Steve tensed up and Nancy held the weed before stating, "So Whats the verdict? Are we going or what?"

28. Chapter Three, Part Six

A small enveloping circle had formed around the floor of the boy's wide cabin, keeping Dustin and Lucas center in the room and preventing anyone from breaking up their sudden brawl.

Max felt herself pushed to the back of the ring as the fight started, the boy's in the cabin making certain not to let her they as they kept chanting fight fight fight fight.

In the middle of the circle, Lucas and Dustin were tumbling over each other, biting and grabbing at each other's hair. She knew that they weren't really going all out, but she also wondered how long this would last.

Behind her in the stormy campground, Eleven and Mike showed up and El asked, "What's going on?" "It's Lucas and Dustin, they're going at it," The redhead said worriedly.

"What? Why?" Mike asked in shock as the group of boys cheered when Lucas hit Dustin's arm.

"Stupid boy shit, El use your powers and stop them!" Max said to the curly haired girl.

Eleven thought about the way Hopper had scolded her the last time that she thought of that and shook her head as the thunder cracked behind her.

"Too dangerous," she said softly.

"Stop it you two!" Mike shouted as he struggled to get past the crowd but the boys would only push him back.

"El, you have to!" Max insisted.

The curly haired girl clenched her fists, unsure of what to do. And then right before she gave in to the pressure, the boys started to disperse. Near the center of the cabin a third party was now involved in the fight and it looked like a rabies infested raccoon.

"Shit!" Mike heard some of the boys say as they cleared out and ran toward another cabin a bit away.

As the raccoon seemingly disappeared before their eyes, all of them looked up and El's eyes widened in surprise as her punk chick sister walked toward them.

"Whoa," Dustin said as he saw the strange looking girl and Lucas shoved him off of him.

El turned toward the purple haired Indian girl and rushed up to her and said, "Sister!"

Mike and the other guys looked at each other in surprise not truly understanding how the two shared a bond but waited patiently for Eleven to explain.

After short introductions were made, Mike turned toward Dustin and Lucas and muttered, "what's gotten into you two? Especially when Will needs us."

The two looked down at the ground shamefully as they all stood under the porch and listened to the storm continue to rattle their surroundings.

"Hopper won't let me get close to Will. He doesn't think we can help," El stated. Max narrowed her eyes as she thought about it and remarked, "Maybe Kali can use her powers to sneak us inside?"

The guys looked toward the new member of their ensemble and Kali shrugged and said, "Sure, I can give it a try. But this won't end well."

"What do you mean?" Dustin asked.

"The Upside Down. It's opened again. We could all be in danger," Mike explained softly.

"It's Will, we can't just let him die," Lucas argued. All of them nodded in agreement, knowing the risk was great but also realized that their friend needed them.

Kali looked toward the rainy campgrounds and gripped her fists

remarking, "Everyone hold hands." The guys quickly agreed and then Mike and El touched hands and the boy smiled as her mood ring shifted to an affectionate color as they squeezed their grip a bit more tightly.

With her open hand El touched Kali's and then the crazy haired girl closed her eyes and focused her gifts.

For a long moment they all stood there uncertainly, not quite understanding what Kali could do and even Dustin asked softly, "Is it working?"

"I think there's only one way to find out," Mike said as the group slowly moved across the wet grass toward the main office. Despite the fact that they were all easily getting soaked by the downpour, each of them had the same determination to help Will. And Kali slowly led them to the front steps even as a stout doctor pushed out past them like he was about to vomit.

"Don't say a word," the punk chick whispered gently as they stood there to be certain the doctor didn't see them. Once they knew the coast was clear they walked inside to where the two rangers were conversing with Hopper.

Blood trickled down the nose of the girl that led the invisible group toward the clinic and Eleven wondered if Hopper would berate her for this choice to figure out what was wrong with Will.

But as they looked at their friend lying on the clinical table still unconscious from his near-death experience she decided she didn't care. "I can't hold this much longer," Kali said worriedly even as Dustin and Lucas let go of the ensemble and closed the door. Kali collapsed on the floor as the group gasped for breath and realized they had made it inside.

Now the question was, could they save their friend

29. Chapter Three, Part Seven

The two teenagers sat quietly in the back seat of Billy's car as he drove thru the storm out of Hawkins.

Hargrove had the radio blasting where talking wasn't really possible and besides which Nancy was too nervous to really say anything anyway. The idea of helping Jonathan had seemed like a good one only a few hours ago, but now she wasn't sure as it seemed like Billy was driving thru the rainy night like a bat out of hell.

Steve seemed distant to her, perhaps thinking about how she was so focused on finding Jonathan or maybe something else entirely. In some ways the sleek haired boy was still a mystery to her. She reached her his hand and touched it gently to get his attention and remarked over the pause in the music, "I'm sorry about Brittany."

Harrington seemed to shrug it off, not sure what to make of the tall blonde or the behavior she was exhibiting lately and didn't make a response as they approached a bridge that led toward the county line.

Billy turned down the radio and leaned back to ask, "How much further Nance?"

She looked out at the road as it meandered toward the wooded area and gestured for him to make a turn at the next intersection, bringing them deeper and deeper into the secluded area.

"Turn on the next left," she added as Billy grabbed the wheel and used the muddy roads to gain some traction.

"Slow down you maniac," Steve muttered as they almost spun out of control. "Shut your pie hole and have some fun, Stevie! You know we are going to party tonight!" Billy howled as they past another random electric pole.

"It's up here, past these trees," Nancy said trying to keep the two boys from fighting.

Billy did slow down just a tad as he winded down the dirt road and

then his car lurched to a stop as they spotted the old wooden lodge.

"Nance, this place is the shit," Hargrove commented as the rain continued to thrash the car. "It's definitely out of the way," Harrington commented as he offered his ex his coat and then the trio rushed toward the front steps of the long wraparound porch.

"Your aunt is pretty well stashed huh?" Billy said admiring the place as Nancy tried not to shiver from the cold rain. It was nearing ten o'clock, the shadowy rain clouds were only intensifying and she wondered if even coming out here was a good idea. There would be no way for them to reach Lake Fortune, not until morning she thought.

Suddenly Billy grabbed her hand and spun her around as he pretended to kiss her and say, "Maybe we should get inside and warm up by a fire?"

Nancy pushed him away and tried to wipe off the stench of the drugs that Billy had smoked even as Steve muttered, "Don't try anything."

"Relax Stevie I was just having some fun. Besides she isn't yours to protect," Hargrove commented as Nancy found the spare key and got them inside the lodge.

Dust covered the animal busts and other hunting trophies that her uncle had hanging on the wall as she reached for the light and looked at the quaint yet well furnished cabin.

Steve nodded in approval as they all stood there examining the furniture and Billy whistled softly and remarked, "Could probably hold about thirty or so people in this party house."

Before Steve made a reply, Nancy heard the sound of tires turning against the muddy road and said, "You didn't get your posse up here now did you?"

"What? Nah, this isn't their type of scene," Billy said as she looked out the window and saw several large jeeps and other vehicles approaching the lodge.

Steve stood back as she kept peering thru the blinds trying to figure

out who it could be and then she felt her heart race a little faster when she recognized some of them were wearing Army uniforms.

"Steve, what's going on?" she asked in a frightened tone even as the men started to approach the cabin.

"Nancy, I'm sorry I can explain..." he began even as the door opened and several armed officers entered the lodge.

Even Billy wore a face of concern as the men piled into the room and then at last a tall dark skinned African American in a white lab coat entered and smiled cordially toward the trio.

"I have to admit, this place is pretty legit. Good work Harrington," the man said.

Nancy and Billy both turned to Steve in shock as he lowered his head in shame and tried to find the words to search for an explanation.

"I got you to where you needed, so let us go now," Steve insisted to the men. The tall man smirked and then laughed softly as he walked over to Steve and pat him on the shoulder softly.

"Oh Steve, Steve, Steve, we've only just started to get to know each other. Nancy, does this place have a kitchen?" The man asked.

She blinked as he looked at her and waited for a response and then nodded slightly and mumbled, "Second door in the back."

"Fantastic! All of you kids are so cooperative. Jenson, get back there and brew me up a hot pot of coffee. It's going to be a long night," the man ordered one of his men even as he clasped his hands together and smiled toward the kids and remarked, "So, maybe now we can sit down and all get to know one another?"

30. Chapter Three, Part Eight

Joyce Byers could hardly see the road in front of her as the windshield wipers on Doctor Owens' truck went back and forth rapidly.

But that didn't stop her from increasing her speed as Sam held onto the sidebar of the vehicle and muttered, "You might want to slow down."

She wasn't listening to him though, as all her thoughts had turned to helping Will. She hated how she had agreed to this camp in the first place and now to hear something was gravely wrong with him just made her feel more sick.

She saw the sign for Lake Fortune said five more miles and gripped the steering wheel harder as the rain only seemed to grow stronger.

Inside the clinic, the gang stood around Will as the adults realized somehow they had slipped past them and tried to pry the door open.

"We can't have another stunt," the female ranger growled as she went to get a hammer.

Hopper looked at his adoptive daughter, Part of him wanting her to help the kid but also fearful of her unleashing her full strength.

"Please," she whispered to him. He didn't speak any words to her but turned to Will's older brother and muttered, "Watch this door. I will distract them. You got about five minutes."

Jonathan stood by the clinic door as Mike brought some clothe for her to cover her eyes.

She smiled and touched his hand, glad their fight earlier had been short and she wanted so badly to just be held in his arms.

Instead she focused on the task in front of her and sat down next to Will's unconscious body as she tied up the cloth and closed her eyes.

Out on the dark highway, Joyce could feel that they were on the

right road but now with the storm having grown far worse she had been forced to reduce her speed.

"Jesus thank you," Dr Owens muttered as she tried to see what was up ahead. Something was blocking the road.

Soft red and blue lights flickered in the thunderstorm as she realized they were heading straight toward it and she slammed hard on the brakes.

Sam grabbed the dashboard and muttered, "What the hell? Why are we stopping?"

She switched on the high beams trying to get a better look and realized it was some sort of vehicle that had overturned due to the slick roads.

In the darkness she could barely make out the words ambulance.

Another, more intense darkness surrounded El as she used her gifts to peer into Will's shattered psyche. She could barely make out the boy as he seemed to be fathoms beneath her in a shallow pool and she tried to reach for him.

But something else was wading in the water below, as she tried to reach for Will she could feel its dark pull beginning to surround her.

This was not the Shadow Monster that she had been expecting. She gasped as she felt it acknowledge her presence and then slowly swirl toward the surface.

Mike reached for her El's arm as she gasped and he took off the blindfold, the curly haired girl standing back as she stared at all of them, almost stumbling onto the floor.

"What's wrong?" Lucas asked.

"This is... its... so powerful," she muttered as she closed her eyes trying to shake the image of the monster from her sight.

"Something in the water... from the other side," El explained fearfully as the boys looked at Will.

"You've got to do something," Max insisted, trying to urge her friend onward. "I... I can't," Eleven admitted as she looked at her shaky hands.

The gang looked at each other uncertain what to do next even as the ranger returned this time with tools to open the clinic door.

"I think I can," Kali said as she closed her eyes and then caused a soft fire to glow on the other side of the doorway, further distracting the adults.

Then she walked over to where Will was at and placed a hand on his forehead.

Joyce wrapped her hood over her face as she shone the flashlight out of the driver side window, trying to get a good look at the overturned ambulance and yet unsure of what had caused the accident. Sam on the other side decided not to wait and hopped out, carefully approaching the overturned vehicle to see if there were any survivors.

As she followed behind him, Joyce looked at the way the vehicle had fallen over and then checked the road and realized it must have hit something. Maybe a deer or another wild animal she thought as the thunder above shook the whole woods.

Mike and the others didn't say a word as blood trickled from Kali's nose and then the new girl said in a shaky voice, "This... is what I told Jane about. It... it is searching for us. It tried to infect Will."

As she held her other hand against his chest the boy's watched and she seemed to draw out some strange misty substance from his body, the electricity in the room began to go out.

At the same moment the rangers broke into the clinic and Lucas and Dustin fell back on the floor.

"She's just trying to help," Mike explained trying to protect Kali as Hopper walked into the clinic and then power continued to fluctuate.

"Sorry, Kid. I don't think there is anything anyone can-" he began and then Will's body began to thrash violently. Suddenly Kali fell

backwards and her body also convulsed out of control.

"What the hell is happening?" Headmaster Peters asked.

Joyce looked toward the driver side of the ambulance, unsurprised to see smashed glass and broken metal everywhere. But then something truly horrifying met her gaze as she realized there was a body near the steering column.

She held a hand over her mouth as she stepped closer and realized that it had been not the accident that had killed this unfortunate driver. But something far worse that tore the poor young woman limb from limb.

"Doctor?" she called out as she stepped back and he grabbed her shoulder and muttered, "We need to get back in the car."

Both Will and Kali appeared to be having a seizure before all of their eyes as the power finally failed completely and then their bodies went prone.

El rushed to her adoptive sister's side as Mike checked Will and then the adults looked up and heard a sharp explosion from outside.

"What the hell?" Hopper muttered. Will's eyes slowly began to open.

"That was the generator," Roberts said as they all stood in the darkened room, looking toward the strange girl that was lying unconscious and listening to the noises outside.

"Will? Are you all right? Can you hear me?" Mike asked as he helped Will sit up.

The boy looked shocked and confused as he looked about the dark room and then saw something out of the corner of his eye move.

He opened his mouth to scream.

Joyce did at the same moment even as they tried to move back toward their car. There standing in their darkened path was a beast that stood nearly nine feet tall.

Thunder crackled as it seemed to realize it was not alone and then roared into the storm, ready to stalk its prey.

END OF CHAPTER THREE

31. Chapter Four, synopsis

CHAPTER FOUR:

CABIN FEVER

The power is out. The roads are closed. And something far darker than a storm is looming over Lake Fortune.

Author's note: Once again I want to thank everyone for their enthusiasm and support as we enter Chapter Four. I will be busy over the next week so won't get to update as much. I hope what I do offer continues to spark interest.

32. Chapter Four, Prologue

A FEW HOURS EARLIER

"Take a seat young man," the tall imposing African American man said as his men pushed Steve Harrington into a chair.

"We have a lot to talk about," the man said with a smile as someone brought a chair for him. "What is this? Who are you?" Steve asked.

"Who we are isn't really important. What is though is what I'm about to tell you. Your friends are in danger Steve; and you can help them," the scientist said.

"Yeah. Okay sure," Harrington said warily as the man sat down.

"Your friends are in some deep shit Harrington, that doesn't matter to you?" The tall man wondered.

"The only problem I see at the moment is you," Steve commented dryly.

The scientist looked down at the floor and snickered gently. "You got balls Steve. But this isn't a game son," he said as a soldier passed him a portfolio.

Opening it up the scientist tossed a picture in front of him causing Steve to frown. "Whats this?" He asked as he examined it closely.

The scientist tossed another photo down on the table as Steve scooted back in his chair. "What the hell?"

"Take a hard look, it makes things a bit clearer doesn't it?" his captor asked

"What the fuck do you want?" Steve asked nervously. And the man only smiled.

NOW

The three teenagers shifted in their seats uncomfortably as the

soldiers made themselves at home in the cabin.

Finally, Billy was the one to speak as he muttered, "This is real shit you got me into Steve."

For once Nancy had to agree with the stoned punk and she said, "What the hell were you thinking?"

"This will probably come to you as a complete shock, but we are all on the same side," the tall black man said as the corporal who brewed the coffee returned with a fresh pot.

"Yeah, sorry I'm not buying that. Especially after what you did to Murray," Nancy said defiantly.

"I'm sorry I'm not too familiar with that name," he admitted. "Don't play dumb. You had him killed all because we leaked what happened in Hawkins, and I bet that's why you are here now," Nancy growled.

"You've got quite a few assumptions don't you Nancy? I think that's probably why I like you the best," the man said as he took out a portfolio and passed her a few pictures.

"Tell me what your assumptions are about this."

Nancy looked at the pictures, immediately appalled by them as she tried to figure them out. The images were gruesome, bodies strewn on the ground and killed by some inhuman power. But the faces were familiar.

The first was of Lucas Sinclair, the second, her ex Steve Harrington. The third sent a chill up her spine as she realized it was her own.

"What... is this..." she muttered softly as she tossed the pictures down.

"I see you are willing to talk now. And I'm sure you have plenty of questions," the man said with a smile as he extended his palm and explained, "But first let's be on a first name basis. Professor Malcolm Stroude, of the Phoenix Syndicate."

"Seriously? You are going to buy into this crap?" Billy said with a scoff.

"I want to know why you're back in Hawkins," Nancy muttered as she ignored him.

Malcolm smiled broadly. "Straight and to the point. Well it so happens miss Wheeler that you can help us leave for good. We're looking for something that was lost."

"So you promise to leave once you find it?" Harrington asked.

"Faster than you can say great Scott," the Professor replied.

"What are you looking for?" Nancy asked.

The scientist reached into his coat pocket and pulled out another photograph to show them

Nancy took it and looked at it with a frown and then showed Steve. The two teens looked confused and finally Billy saw it.

He laughed as he asked, "What the hell do you want with Zombie Boy?"

33. Chapter Four, Part One

Hopper reached for his gun. The darkness was easy to play tricks with his eyes as he looked across at where the glass was shattered.

A moment ago he had been sure he had seen something move, like a strange shapeless being crawling across the top of the clinical table.

Then as he shone his flashlight across the table all he saw was a memory of a slimy substance, the same green material that he was sure had been covering Will's lungs.

As he examined the glass and the window itself, he listened to the storm battering the entire campground and then turned his light back to the group of kids that had somehow snuck into the clinic without any of them seeing.

"Would someone mind telling me what the hell is going on?" Hopper asked as he focused the flashlight on the unconscious Indian girl.

Jane stepped forward sheepishly and looked down at the floor before saying, "The gate... it's been opened."

Hopper looked at her for a long moment and then realization struck his heart as he saw the others slowly nodding their heads and the rangers entering the room.

"Well fuck."

"Deputy, care to explain all this? Who is this?" Peters remarked as they got the young foreign girl onto a table.

"Is the power out all across camp?" Hopper asked to which Richards nodded and he cursed to himself again as he told the two Headmasters, "We should keep all the kids in one place. I'm sure by now the rain has woke them all up."

"The mess hall has a backup generator. It's not full strength but it should get us thru the night," Susan explained. Hopper nodded absently as he kept his eyes on the boys from Hawkins and he remarked, "I'll get them over there. You focus on the other two

cabins."

Surprisingly the rangers didn't bother questioning him and for once he was glad he still had some authority even if it wasn't true. He was sure that with the way things were going he would need to keep everyone safe in the hours to come.

Once the rangers were both out, Hopper looked at the kids and muttered, "All right, talk."

Soon the boys were all chattering at once. "Well there was a Demogorgon."

"Demodog."

"Her name is Kali..."

"She's a sister from another mother."

"There's a monster."

"We need to get out of here!"

"We're all going to die."

"Okay okay enough," he said in frustration as he focused the flashlight on Jane. "Can you make it simple for me?" He asked tiredly.

"She's like me," Jane explained as she showed her adoptive father the tattoo on her right arm. "The bad men found her. And now the gate to the other side is open again," she added sourly.

Hopper nodded as he wished he has a cigarette to smoke and then muttered, "What's this business about a Demodog...?"

"I sorta stashed one in my freezer last winter. Pretty sure it's alive now though," Dustin explained as red covered his cheeks in embarrassment.

"Okay... anything else?" Hopper asked.

The boys looked at each other to try and see if they had forgotten

and Mike said, "I think that covers it."

"Yeah. Let's hope it does. So what the hell did it want with Will?" Hopper asked as he turned his attention to the young frightened boy.

"I just remember... feeling cold. And sinking... and being somewhere other than here. Somewhere beneath the lake," Will said even as his older brother brought him a clean shirt and a towel.

"So these Demodogs are in water now?" Hopper guessed. Again the boys looked at each other in uncertainty and Mike admitted, "Its possible this may be something else entirely. The only creatures we ever encountered were from the gate near Hawkins. This could be a whole new breed."

"Fantastic," Hopper muttered as he tried to figure out what to do.

"There is some good news. If it is water based it can't go far," Dustin chimes in.

Hopper glared at him for a while as the storm hit the clinic again and he looked down and muttered, "Oh yeah. Right..."

"Jonathan get these kids to the mess hall. Then meet me back here," Hopper told the oldest boy.

He passed Jonathan his gun and added, "Hurry back cause that's the only firearm I've got right now."

Will slid off the table quietly and followed the group even as Jane looked at her adoptive father uncertainly. "What can we do to help?" Max asked, whispering what Jane was feeling.

"Stick with the BrainTrust. Maybe you can put your heads together and figure out how to stop this thing," Hopper retorted as he squeezed Jane to stay behind for just a moment.

As the others left, she looked across the room to where the Indian girl was lying unconscious, knowing what Hopper wanted to ask.

"I wanted to tell you," Jane admitted to him.

"We can talk about that later. Can you help me get her to the X-ray?" Hopper suggested as he smiled softly at her.

Trying to reassure her that it was all going to be ok.

34. Chapter Four, Part Two

She hit the back of the turned over ambulance hard like a ricocheted bullet, her heart pounding as Doctor Owens caught her arm and gestured for her to be motionless.

The creature was unlike any she had ever seen before, but every bit of its body screamed terror and dread into her mind as its glassy eyes seemed to be staring into the dark night.

It can't see us she thought in relief as it slowly moved a few inches forward, its quadruped like legs digging into the wet soil like that of a gazelle or perhaps even an elephant. It was roughly the size of a bear, with glistening thick armor that appeared to be gray and colorless like its eyes.

Its snout was sharp like the type of hawks that were common in the spring, except much wider with small jagged teeth on every side of the mouth. Short bony protrusions emerged from its head and traveled down its spiny back giving the creature an extra layer of protection as it aimlessly searched the night.

One false move and she was certain they would be done for. Joyce glanced at Doctor Owens as he slowly reached for the handle to the ambulance's door, likely reasoning they would be far safer inside the toppled vehicle. She tried to tell him not to risk it but it was too late.

The monster seemed to hear and smell every portion of the dark road all at once and that was when Joyce had an idea. She recalled as they had left the diner a few hours earlier that the doctor's truck had a fancy new type of alarm that connected to the key.

She fumbled into her pockets frantically as the creature started lumbering toward them and then felt the key and touched the button causing the soft alarm to activate.

The sound caused the creature to divert its attention for a moment which Sam quickly took advantage of to get the door open. Slowly they crawled into the back of the toppled vehicle, all the while keeping their eyes on the armored monster.

As they scrambled into the rear, they also were careful not to knock anything over in the cubby lest the savage beast be aware of their deception. Joyce drew a sigh of relief.

But it was only for a moment as a nod of gloves tumbled out onto the vehicle floor.

Sam's eyes widened in fright as the creature made a low guttural noise and bounded toward their hiding spot.

"Close the door!" Owens shouted as she reached for it, slamming it shut as the beak of the monstrosity slammed into the glass and tried to grab at her.

She screamed wildly as the creature roared louder, ready to find a way into their brief escape.

Inside the small summer lodge, the three teenagers watched helplessly as the members of the Army Reserve brought in a variety of equipment.

Nancy kept an eye on the strange devices, as she wondered how the contraptions were supposed to help find Will, and perhaps how she could stop them. Despite the reassurance of both her ex and the strange research team, Nancy was not about to accept the possibility that this organization was coming to help Will.

Billy on the other could have cared less about what the men were doing or why, all he cared about at the moment was escape. He watched patiently as the men left the cabin and remembered how long it took them to go to their trucks and come back. Seemed like it was about seven minutes every single time.

The man in charge... Stroude, didn't really seem to be paying too much attention to him or Steve and Nancy.

That meant they underestimate what we can do, Billy thought as he slouched back a bit further in the couch and waited.

Nancy was watching him too, wondering if he was really going to try and make a run for it. She didn't think that Billy was that stupid. There had to be at least twenty men here, she thought.

Stroude passed her by as the men starting putting the equipment together and he commented softly, "It's a work of art, isn't it? I bet you would love to see how it works."

"It looks like some kind of conductor," Nancy commented, hoping that by getting the man to talk he could learn more about their motives.

"Nancy, there's no need to play dumb. I know all about your essays before graduation, I know all of you. Hawkins has become something of a hobby of mine. What makes this area so special?" Stroude replied as he started to pin up a map on the right wall near some old family portraits of her aunt and uncle.

"Are you talking to yourself or what dude?" Billy retorted as he started to measure certain portions of the map.

"I don't expect you to understand. But once we can stabilize the gate to the other side... you can't even imagine what we can accomplish," Stroude explained.

"You're insane," Steve muttered.

"Yeah that's a nice way of saying psycho," Billy insisted.

"Will both of you please shut up?" Nancy asked as she looked at the map, trying to figure out what the scientist was doing.

The men in the room also seemed temporarily distracted as Malcolm laughed and turned his back on the teens. Billy didn't see a better opportunity.

Grabbing one of the belts on the man closest to him he snatched the gun and then pointed it toward them, causing all in the room to immediately unholster their own fire arms.

"Just give me an exit out of here and I won't cause any trouble," Hargrove told the soldiers as they tried to close in on him.

"Who the hell are you?" Malcolm muttered in irritation as he gestured for his men to shoot him. Billy fired at one of the men close to him, and then raced to the door.

He didn't get far before they had recaptured him, both Steve and Nancy looked at each other and quietly sat without saying a word.

The gun Billy had snatched lay unhandled on the floor near Steve's foot. He thought about grabbing for it and gunning down the nearest soldier.

Stroude loomed over them and snarled, "Don't even think about it."

Kicking the weapon across the floor he turned to a short haired brown haired man and remarked, "Get these three into the basement."

As the soldiers bullied them toward the stairs Nancy looked toward the device they were constructing, wondering if there was any chance they could actually stop them before it was used.

35. Chapter Four, Part Three

Nearly three hundred children crammed into the mess hall of the camp, all wet and tired and especially cranky as they looked about in confusion waiting for the adults to explain why they had been woke up.

Outside the raging storm seemed to remind them all of the danger they were in, but none seemed to understand it as much as the small group led by Jonathan Byers.

All of them were exhausted and frustrated wanting answers but also scared for their lives as each lightning strike reminded them of the danger just beyond their walls.

"Stay put. Keep my brother safe," Jonathan told them in a stern voice. They didn't even have a chance to retort anything as Jonathan was back out the door.

Max slumped into a seat at the table and growled, "This is bull shit. I know we can help."

The boys looked at each other, then turned to Will and Lucas asked, "How about it Will? Do you think you could remember what happened if we tried? Like a sensory chamber like with El?"

Will looked more frightened than the rest of them and they all knew why. For some reason these monsters from the Upside Down were specifically targeting him. The idea of getting face to face with such evil was enough to make his knees knock.

"I don't know... I'm not sure I can even do that..." Will replied nervously.

"We have to try something," Mike insisted.

"What are you idiots doing over here?" a voice chimed in before they could discuss a plan and they all looked in exasperation to see Ned and several other older boys looking at them skeptically.

"I bet you turds are the reason we have to sleep in this shithole," Ned

added as he glanced at the bruises Dustin had and added, "Looks like you came out on top Sinclair."

"What do you want?" Lucas asked. "We don't need this right now," Dustin added.

"Aww did you kiss and make up? How sweet. Hey where's the freakazoid? Did she run off to powder her nose?" Ned asked with a laugh. "Shut up," Mike said as he realized that they were talking about El.

"Or what? Look the adults are out there handling this shit storm so there is nobody here to protect you," Ned reminded them all as he towered over Mike.

"What's your problem? You have no idea what the hell is going on right now," Max added. "Shut it you bitch. You're the one that started shot the other day too," Ned growled. Lucas stood up and said, "Take it back."

In a short moment Dustin did too and for a second Ned hesitated.

As the three boys seemed ready to tumble again, a low rumble caused the entire building to shake and the hanging lights above to flicker on and off.

The generator was barely functioning.

Ned looked up in surprise as he muttered, "What was that?"

The group didn't say anything even as the growls returned to the night air and Dustin muttered, "Demodog..."

"Dema What?" Ned asked as some of the windows started to crack.

"We need to take cover!" Lucas shouted excitedly as he and the other boys rushed to hide another a table.

Ned stood there for a moment in confusion as the rain pushed open the back door of the mess hall and the girl he was making fun of a moment earlier entered the cafeteria.

The young black boy laughed as the soaked girl approached the table where they were all hiding and El asked, "Mike. Why are you under the table?"

"Jesus you all are crazy," Ned said as his attention was diverted elsewhere and the boys crawled out from their hiding spot.

"Thought it was a Demogorgon," Lucas replied with a nervous laugh.

"I felt something though," Will agreed as they looked toward the door and El nodded and said, "Come look."

They followed wordlessly to the edge of the cafeteria where the storm was softly battering the hard cement floor and stared out at the soaked grass, their eyes immediately falling on the large imprint in the mud.

"I don't think that's a Demogorgon..." Max said nervously as they realized it seemed much larger than the footprint of the dog like mutants they had faced before.

"We have to follow this trail, find their base. That has to be where the gate was opened," Mike said turning forward the group enthusiastically.

"Yeah. What could possibly go wrong venturing out into the dead of night while hell beasts stalk us?" Lucas retorted.

"They're not after you," Will said in a voice that sounded like he knew for sure. The entire group looked at him as he seemed to show a new sense of confidence and he explained, "Eleven and I can create a diversion while you guys find the hive."

"It's crazy enough it might work," Dustin agreed.

"Sitting here will only make more problems," Max decided. It seemed that a plan was in motion as the group separated and Eleven and Will watched the others gather some flash lights and stalk the monster.

"I got a bad feeling about this," Will admitted softly. Eleven squeezed his hand and said, "No one brave was never afraid."

Carl Danner sat in the clinic and stared across the darkened room to where the man holding the rifle watched the door and waited for the rangers or anyone else to return.

He had busied himself in the last few minutes by examining the unconscious girl who still lay cold and unresponsive on the slab.

The things he had seen in the past hour were enough to make him question his sanity, especially when it came to the weird powers that these children seemed to possess. It reminded him of some old project he had seen over in Norway once during the war but had been quickly cancelled out.

No. That wasn't right. This was more like what the Russians did, he decided firmly. Hopper wasn't really paying him much attention as he held the rifle steady and watched Jonathan run across the campgrounds and get back to the clinic in a few short sprints.

As the teen took a breather, Hopper glanced at all of the artillery that they had gathered and wondered if it would be enough to stop whatever was out there.

"You need to watch the girl," Hopper told the doc as they loaded up weapons. "Like hell I do. Listen Deputy I have been patient with you up to now but this whole place is going bonkers. I want answers," Danner insisted.

The other man sighed, knowing that the more people knew the harder it would be to contain this situation but he knew his options were limited.

"Short version? We're under attack," Hopper explained.

"The commies?" Danner asked in shock. "More like the VietKong," he replied grimly as flashes of the time he spent over there raced through his mind.

"Then we need to use the back up generator and send an SOS," Danner muttered.

"Look. I know you want to help. And you know that this is highly dangerous. Military isn't the solution here. You saw what these kids

can do. That type of thing means we are dealing with a threat unlike anything we dealt with before," Hopper answered.

"You mean it's a conspiracy," he whispered. "Yeah. Exactly. So can you handle your mission or what?" Hopper asked. The doctor saluted smartly to him as he saw the rangers approach. Soon the clinic was empty save for himself and the strange girl.

He turned toward her, wondering what other gifts she possessed and then looked toward his equipment.

What would the harm be in just a cursory scan?

He knew it would pull a little juice from the generator. But the rangers were out there handling the situation...

His curiosity got the better of him as he started to hook up the gear and see what the patterns would reveal to him.

Cranking to the usage of the equipment he watched as the monitors came to life and revealed spikes of neural activity. In fact the more he looked he became certain that the girl was displaying abnormal amounts of functionality for being unconscious.

Almost like a lucid dream he thought as he reached for the drink of New Coke on his desk nearby.

He kept looking at the scans as the storm just beyond his room grew stronger and then toward the girl. He knew she was not awake, but something about the way the charts showed her brain activity made him wonder.

What could she accomplish awake if this was her strength while unaware?

36. Chapter Four, Part Four

For ten minutes, Joyce Byers was sure that her life was going to be at an end. Her and Doctor Owens had somehow managed to stay inside the secure hull of the turned over ambulance while a strange unearthly creature searched desperately for some means of entry.

Now it seemed as though the monster was calming down, and she knew that was either a good thing or a very bad one. Either it had given up on trying to attack, or it was determining its next move.

Her heart beat faster and faster as she looked about the rear of the ambulance, searching for anything that might be useful as a weapon.

She caught sight of a fire extinguisher rolling across the floor under a cluttered mess of plastic and gloves and knew it might be their only chance. Now if we had some matches she thought as she heard the creature growl just beyond the smashed doors.

She recalled that the older man she had driven her had offered her a lighter during the frantic trip and asked, "Doctor, do you still have that lighter?" Sam instantly checked his pockets and said, "Damn. I think I left its in the truck."

"It's our only chance," she told him as they felt the ambulance rock. Sam clenched his teeth and looked out toward the storm trying to get a good look at the creature. With the intense rain it was almost impossible to be sure just where it might be.

"If we are going to try it has to be now," Sam told her, almost certain the monster was temporarily distracted.

She held the extinguisher close to her body and looked toward the door, their only safety from what evil awaited outside.

"I should be the one to do it," Sam said bravely. She looked toward the older man in surprise as he took the equipment from her and added, "You've got a family. They are counting on you to reach them."

She didn't say a word as he crouched close to the door, listening for any other noises from the creature. "I think that the coast is clear," Sam muttered.

Opening the handle, the door fell open to the outside and he peered into the dark, almost certain he was falling into a trap.

Carefully and silently he walked out across the gap between vehicles and Joyce reached for the door, uncertain how quickly she would need to slam it shut if danger presented itself.

But she also wanted to give Sam every opportunity to get back inside if he had to run, so as he inches closer and closer to his Ford she felt her heart beat louder.

Sam even felt the need to crouch as though it would obscure his body, inside the truck though he wasted no time scrabbling to find the cigarette lighter.

As his hand touched it near the middle console he smiled in relief and then stepped back out onto the grimy muddy road.

He held it up like a trophy for Joyce to see and for a brief moment she smiled, gesturing him to hurry back.

But that moment ended quickly as Doctor Owens felt his right foot sink into the dirt and he looked down, only to see a widening maw of teeth on either side of the shoe he wore.

Before he could react the creature opened its mouth wider and grabbed ahold of his leg, causing Joyce to scream out in horror as he fell to the ground.

Sam cried out in agony as the ground around him shifted and the burrowed monster pulled him toward his death, his frantic but soft eyes turning to Joyce and begging her to do something.

Something inside her stirred her to action and she took hold on the fire extinguisher and ran toward the chaotic scene.

Holding it over her head, Joyce gritted her teeth and slammed it against the snout of the armored beast.

The first hit only seemed to anger it further as it pulled Sam deeper into the pit it had crafted and the doctor tried in vain to find anything to grasp ahold of.

Again and again she battered the monster until at last it let go, severing Owens' leg right below the knee.

Tucking the damaged extinguisher under her arm she pulled Sam back toward the ambulance.

As they drew closer to it the monster burst thru the ground again and reared up like a wild horse, ready to kill them both.

Sam ignited the cigarette lighter and gestured for Joyce to pass him the extinguisher, which she did without hesitation.

He stood back as the creature seemed to be evaluating the threat and then started a mist toward the monster, spraying it as fast as he could.

Tossing the lighter straight at the monster, they both watched as the cloud of spray turned into a fire storm and the creature screeched in agony.

"Get into the truck," Sam ordered. "I'm not leaving you!" she insisted as she pulled him up and together they moved to the Ford.

She started the vehicle as he winced in pain and behind them the monster continued to be burned and thrashed about. Grabbing the door, Joyce slammed it and pressed hard on the gas.

Doctor Owens tried to smile in relief as they drove away, but the pain from his leg was too great. Joyce looked at all of the blood, knowing that at any moment the older man could fall unconscious. And then stepped on the gas even harder as she turned the corner. She wasn't about to let this man die, not here, not now.

37. Chapter Four, Part Five

The small kitchen was darker than the other areas of the mess hall as Will and Eleven walked to a secluded portion of the room and she grabbed a clean apron to tie around her head as a blindfold.

"So how does this work?" Will asked as they both sat on the cold cement floor.

"When the bad men forced me to find people for them, they often showed me a picture. Wil remember last year when we faced the Shadow Monster we did the same thing... except you drew it," Eleven explained as she extended her hands to the boy.

"This time I want you to think about what you experienced. Focus on the monster," she told him. The blindfold was in place and Will nodded, closing his own eyes and trying to concentrate.

In the cabin across the east side of Lake Fortune, Stroude watched as the final piece of equipment was in place and ordered the soldiers. "Fire it up!" He shouted. The generator they were using to power the strange contraption made a soft whirling noise as it came on and they all waited to see what it would reveal.

El felt cold, the sleek and endless abyss of the dark dimension seemed to close in on her as she looked about. Hearing whispers of sound that barely formed into thoughts.

Enalp raf."

Hctirdle

Hteloba.

"Will?" :she called out as she peered they the shadows. Amid the mist she saw the shadow of a boy.

Malcolm Stroude watched as the machine input numbers and coordinates his eyes glancing at the map to pinpoint the exact location.

"We're close boys, increase power," the Professor shouted as he lit a cigarette.

Enalp raf.

Hctirdle

Hteloba.

She approached the shadowy boy, trying to touch it, seeing the soulless eyes there that looked so sad and searching for something to cling to.

"Will, show me what you see!" she yelled out.

"Far plane..." his voice echoed as the coldness in the darkness shimmered and seemed to touch her skin. This place felt so much more distant and dangerous than anything she had seen before.

Beneath her feet, something stirred, like an eel slithering thru water. The demon of the lake was approaching her.

Snapping the thumb tack to the forest map, the scientist seemed to congratulate himself as he snarled, "This is the focal point. Haha! I told you we would find it again!"

The machine seemed to use the last of its energy to tell him one more key piece of information and this one only made him smile a little wider.

"Jane Ives..." he said with a twisted grin.

"Far Plane..."

"Will, what is this place?" El asked her voice frightened as she saw the large aquatic creature loom closer and then emerged from the slimy oily surface of the water it called home.

"Eldritch..."

Will's voice was only an echo as amid the shadowy realm she saw three looming eyes peer toward her, rows of sharp jagged teeth

opened and the massive oily monster grew to its full size, larger than anything she could have imagined.

"Something is wrong sir," one soldier mentioned as the machine seemed to go out of control. "Keep it going. I need to find that girl." Malcolm snapped back as the loud whirling noise grew louder and the cabin began to shake. I'm so close I can taste it he thought with a wicked grin.

"Eldritch."

"Far Plane..."

The creature was larger than a school bus, its body a sleek thick skin of dangerous toxins ready to consume all as its snake like form showed its true power. It resembled a bizarre eel, with a long tubular body as well as a tail at one end and two fins near the head and another along the back, and a little bit back from the head were four long tentacles, two sprouting from across each other on the top, and two more of the same on the underbelly. Its head was roughly triangular-shaped, with a spherical, somewhat beak-like nose. Above the nose were their three eyes, each one set atop the other. Tendrils and a few shorter tentacles dangled from the bottom of the head. Four blue-black slime-secreting orifices lined the bottom of its body.

"Aboleth."

The machine in the cabin burst apart as the last piece of data was gathered and the soldiers hastily put out the fire as Malcolm stared at the map, the different axis points showing him where the energy reading came from. The camp on the other side of the lake. And Jane Ives was there too. What a lucky day.

He told one of the soldiers to remain and monitor the basement and then rushed out to get into a Jeep. Nothing would stop him now.

"Far Plane!" Will shouted as she started to back away from the claw tail of the massive eel.

"Eldritch!" He said even louder as its mouth opened and the green slime seemed to shoot straight towards her.

El stood back, holding out her hands to block it with her psychic gifts as the noise of the monster grew louder.

"Aboleth!"

She gasped as she pulled off the blindfold and tossed it aside, looking down at her hands that were shaking and then across at Will.

"What... was that.." Will muttered with a shaky voice.

She remembered every detail, every horrific patch of flesh, it's roaming eyes. It wasn't the Shadow Monster, but it was an evil perhaps as powerful as it. El remembered the way Kali had described her descent into the Upside Down.

Cold, ancient. Malevolent. Evil. It's only purpose to consume and control the realm they knew as Home. Now though it had a name, and perhaps with it she could find the way to kill it.

"We need to find Mike," she told the boy on the kitchen floor as they both stood to leave.

Just beyond their line of vision, a slowly creeping slime oozed across the floor, it was larger than it had been before. Larger, and smarter.

38. Chapter Four, Part Six

With each passing step, Mike, Max, Lucas and Dustin were beginning to lose track of the muddy trail they were following, which could only mean one of two things.

Either the Demogorgon they were hunting had found a way to disappear, or worse, it was aware they were following it and was simply waiting to spring a trap.

For now Dustin wanted to believe that the monster had simply vanished, but still Mike pressed them to go further. "The den has to be somewhere close, maybe in those caves," he suggested as he shone his flashlight toward the old mine shaft entrance. Lucas and Dustin both gave him a skeptical frown as they stood there and Lucas replied, "I can think of at least eight reasons why going into an abandoned cave is a bad idea."

"Maybe it's returned to the scene of the kill we found this morning," Dustin suggested. Thunder crackled above them as Mike sighed and realized that they both were not going to go near the mine and then pushed past them to go toward the lake shore. "You're both pussies," he growled.

Max stood there for a moment as well and smiled awkwardly at her crush before remarking, "If its any consolation I wasn't going in there either guys..."

The trail that Hopper was on was still fresh, wide tracks spaced evenly together implied that the creature they were hunting might be a four legged one. But far, far larger than any ordinary animal that stalked these woods, Hopper thought as he held his gun steady and heard the rainstorm boom around him.

"Not exactly the way I wanted to spend summer vacation," Jonathan said dryly as they moved along the exterior of the forest, the strange noise of a beast rumbling closer.

"Get ready," Hopper said as he aimed toward the treeline, although he was certain there was likely very little to help him be prepared for

what was to come.

Near the water's edge, the group of kids heard the noise as well. As they had rushed to follow Mike, the creature had become aware of their presence.

The first thing they were aware of though was the stench. Dustin and Max both held their noses as the foul odor went into the air. It smelled worse than a skunk or even a dead animal. As they approached the lake side they soon were able to see why it was so horrid.

The carcass still had blood and ooze spilling out onto the muddy ground as the monster that had attacked it continued to devour the fresh kill. Mike could not help but to gently tap the flashlight and get a better look.

"That's... not a Demogorgon," Lucas muttered as they stared at the large wolf that was tending the flesh from the bone. As they crouched in the tall grass of the woods, the group noticed exactly what the wolf had attacked. It had been the dangerous creature they had thought they were hunting.

"How did it bring down a Demodog?" Dustin whispered. Finally the wolf had decided to turn its attention to the sounds in the treeline and they understood why.

It's eyes flowed like a ghost, it's teeth and fur seemingly larger than normal and the boys immediately realized this normal beast was somehow possessed.

And now it was looking straight at them.

Hopper knew they were right on top of their target but as he raised his weapon and circled about the dense trees he still couldn't see any sign of the beast.

Jonathan held his own gun just as steady, his back against Hoppers as he tried to mimic the former sheriff.

The growl grew steadier as they saw something move in the grass and then a large wolf started bounding toward them.

Even from this angle Hopper could tell this was no ordinary beast. But he fired all the same to try and scare it away.

The strange possessed creature turned about and started to run and he held his rifle ready, knowing that he would need to finish the job.

Jonathan followed behind, making certain to watch where Hopper treaded and not fall into a snag or loose mud. The two of them held their guns at the ready as the wild wolf dashed frantically toward the lake shore.

Mike heard the approaching footsteps first and turned his light toward the noise, his eyes widening as the two familiar faces came toward them.

"What the hell?" Hopper asked. "Watch out!" Lucas shouted as behind them the mutated wolf climbed down a tree.

Jonathan whipped about and fired at it straight in the face making the beast rear back as Hopper shouted, "I thought I told you all to protect Will!"

"We did. We told him to stay at the mess hall," Max objected even as the noises grew and they turned to see two more wolves entering the clearing.

"You are all idiots," Jonathan grumbled as the kids hunched closer to the former sheriff. "Hopper... what do we do?" Dustin asked nervously.

Hopper swallowed hard as they soon became surrounded by the strange possessed wolves and muttered, "We are so screwed."

39. Chapter Four, Part Seven

The sign that showed the entrance of Lake Fortune was the first thing in the dreary night that brought her comfort as Joyce squeezed the hand of the man that was unconscious in the passenger seat.

She had found a way to stop the bleeding from his severed leg, if only temporarily. The two jackets they had worn earlier in the night which had only worked briefly during the softer parts of the storm were now completely soaked and wrapped around the portion of his leg that was likely now throbbing in pain.

"We're here, thank God," Joyce said as she turned toward the main ranger office and began to blare on the horn.

She rolled down the window as she looked out about at the darkened buildings and then saw a glimmer of light coming from another trailer not far down the road. The sign next to it read clinic and she knew that if anyone could help they would be there.

Joyce pulled the vehicle in reverse and then pushed the truck a little further to reach the clinic, holding her hand down on the horn in order to alert those inside.

In a few moments the screen doors opened and a stout older man looked toward her car as she rolled the window down again and waved for him to come help.

The man rushed down the steps as best as he could to her driver window and then peered in to see what the situation was about and muttered, "What the hell happened to him?"

She pushed the door open and got out of the truck replying, "You wouldn't believe me if I told you. Can you help me get him inside?"

"Yeah sure," he replied and followed her around to get Sam out. Together they carried the unconscious man inside the clinic and barely made it to the lobby as the stout man remarked, "He's lost a lot of blood..."

"We need to keep him elevated. Do you have more towels?" Joyce asked.

"We used most of it earlier... oh lord where is that ambulance?" He muttered. "It's not coming," she answered grimly as she looked at the man and said, "He might have more ideas than we do. If we can wake him up..."

"Shit... yeah. I have something in here. We used the last of it on that boy," the doctor answered. "Boy?" Joyce repeated as she grabbed the man's coat and asked, "Whats happened to my son?"

"Oh shit. You're the Mom."

Under the floor of the cabin on the other side of Lake Fortune, Billy was beginning to grow tired of whatever shit Steve Harrington had got them into. The other two teens didn't seem to have any bright ideas, but he was carefully watching the soldier at the top of the stairs, waiting to see when the man wasn't looking.

"Give it a rest and sit down," Harrington said to which Billy turned and looked at him and said, "Shut your pie hole. You're the reason we are in here to begin with anyway."

"You saw those pictures, he said our lives were in danger," Steve objected.

"Steve, seriously how could you even do this? They're going to find Will and take him away somewhere. You know what they did to Eleven," Nancy muttered.

"I didn't know what to do," he admitted looking down at the ground in sadness. "Oh seriously you going to throw a pity party now? Grow up pussy," Billy snarled.

"Like you've gone thru half the shit that I have!" the other teen said. The soldier seemed to notice their argument and was slowly coming down the stairs.

Nancy wasn't sure if the boys were doing this on purpose or not but she muttered, "Both of you are dickheads. Billy is right Steve. Your dad lost his job and you just decided to give up on everything in life."

Steve looked especially hurt by her words as the soldier came down and growled, "Hey! All of you need to shut it!"

Billy noticed the opportunity and went from behind. Steve hesitated for just a second as the soldier fell down and his gun slid to the floor. "What are you waiting for? Grab it!" Billy insisted. Nancy snatched it up and pointed it toward the soldier and said, "Get up!"

The man did as he was told as the girl held him at gun point and she said, "You're going to get us out of here."

Joyce Byers looked down at the unconscious Indian girl as Carl Danner prepared the drug which would wake up Sam and she tried to piece together everything that the doctor had told her. She didn't think he had the complete story, but the bits of it seemed to connect to What Sam had told her earlier about the military now being connected to the old Hawkins employees.

Just what are they trying to do by experimenting on these kids, she wondered.

"I think it's ready," Danner said as he finished the compound and they returned to where the unconscious older man was waiting. For now the bleeding had subsided but Joyce knew if they didn't stop it completely he was going to die.

"I really hope you've got a brilliant idea doc," she said softly as Danner injected him with the serum.

"Give it a minute," he suggested as he took a step back.

Joyce sat down and held the man's hand as Carl stared at the portion of the drug he hadn't used, an idea forming in his brain.

A single clap of thunder shot across the sky as the group of strange other worldly wolves circled the group of children in the woods. All of them clinged to Hopper for security as Dustin kept muttering shit over and over and both Hopper and Jonathan tried to scare the wolves aware by firing toward them.

The weapons didnt seem to even phase the possessed beasts as they loomed closer, ready for the kill.

Then one of them flew up into the air with a startled howl and they all stepped back in surprise.

"Jane!" Hopper said in relief as the curly haired girl stepped closer to the group, Will right by her side.

"Get them El!" Max shouted excitedly as the wolves turned their attention to her.

Nancy, Billy and Steve carefully entered the first floor of the cabin as they realized that the other soldiers were distracted in the kitchen and the one they had hostage was guiding them to the door. But that moment of relief only lasted for a second as their captive shouted to his comrades for help.

"Shit," Steve said as he pushed the man down and Billy clutched the gun. "Grab his keys lets go!" Nancy told them both as the other men entered with their guns raised. Billy shot a round on the floor as the trio raced outside and found the correct vehicle.

"They're coming! Go! Go!" Billy told her as she cranked up the Jeep. He shot a few more rounds against the night as the men got into their own vehicles and the chase began.

Carl Danner stepped toward his unconscious patient and checked the solution one more time. I have to know just what this is, he resolved, glancing back to be sure that he was alone. He injected the needle into her right arm and waited, listening for any signs of change.

Abruptly behind him he heard the man that had come with Joyce Byers gasp for air and she held him up.

Sam looked about in shock and confusion as Danner returned to the lobby and said, "Sir, I'm the chief physician here at Lake Fortune. I want to help you as best as I can."

Doctor Owens looked down at his wound and then toward the crude equipment. "Do you have any blood here?" Sam asked softly.

Eleven was standing near to the group now to try and protect them as she used her gifts again, and yet this time the wolves were even more angry, pushing past her psychic abilities. "Shit, what's wrong," Lucas

said.

"They... I don't know. They're too strong!" she said frantically as Jonathan shot straight at one of the wolves faces and yet the bullet seemed to go straight thru the beast with no affect.

"What the hell?" Mike shouted.

Danner was about to make another suggestion when the girl on the table also gasped for breath. She was awake. The lights flickered for a brief moment as power seemed to return.

She sat up and looked toward them, looking more frightened than aware.

At the same time, the leader of the wolf pack was leaping toward the group and El tried to cover them all. Then, like a mist, it vanished completely.

For a moment they all stood there in confusion and Hopper looked at the other wolves. But the glow in their eyes was gone and the animals seemed almost as confused as all of them.

Jonathan tried a warning shot, and the pack howled excitedly and ran off into the woods as though frightened. Whatever had once controlled them was now gone.

"What the hell is going on?" Dustin asked.

Hopper shook his head as he held his gun ready in case they returned and muttered, "I have no idea. But we better get back."

40. Chapter Four, Part Eight

Doctor Danner checked her for any signs of injury or concussion and once he was certain the girl had a fine bill of health he turned his attention to the older man who was trying his best to ignore the pain.

"There really isn't anything here to help me," Sam finally declared even as Joyce shook her head and muttered, "No. I won't believe that."

"Joyce... I appreciate what you did to get me to safety. But... I... I don't think it's going to be long now," Sam said.

Danner turned toward the door as he heard noises approach. "Someone is coming," he alerted her. Joyce sat next to Doctor Owens for a moment until she saw who was coming in the door. First was Hopper followed by her two boys and she smiled, trying not to cry.

"Joyce, What the heck are you doing here?" Jim asked in surprise. "Mom!" Jonathan and Will said as they looked at her disheveled appearance.

Then the entire group turned their attention to the man who was clearly dying and Lucas tried his best not to throw up.

"Demogorgon..." Dustin muttered. "I don't know what it was, but it was straight from hell," Joyce said as she hugged her boys fiercely.

Eleven walked over to her adoptive sister and the two touched hands as Kali smiled softly and said, "It looks like I have missed all the fun."

"It was a shit storm," Mike muttered softly to which even Jonathan seemed to agree. "Curious though, that the storm has gone now," Danner mentioned.

"What do you mean?" Mike asked.

"Right after I woke her, the storm seemed to clear," Carl explained.

"You mean like instantly?" Hopper said, also noticing their conversation.

"Sort of like that," Danner agreed.

"What does that mean? What's going on Jim?" Sam asked as he tried to move.

"No, you need to sit back. I'm thinking," Hopper said as he asked the other doctor, "How long ago was this?"

"Maybe five, ten minutes. Why do you ask?" Carl countered.

"That's about the same time those wolves returned to normal," Lucas realized. "Wolves?" Joyce repeated as she squeezed Will a bit tighter.

"They were controlled, like demons or something," Mike explained. "What, are you saying she had something to do with that?" Eleven asked as she looked toward Kali in confusion.

"That's not possible... is it?" Max asked looking toward the gifted girls.

"I'm... I'm not sure," Kali admitted.

Doctor Owens was looking at her intently for a moment and then shook his head, "Shit. They really did it, didn't they?"

"Did what?" Hopper asked turning his attention to the other man.

"After... god..." Sam said as he tried to sit up and Joyce helped him. "Take it easy," she advised him. "Doc, What are you trying to say?" Hopper asked.

"After the lab closed. I have been listening to the rumors swirling about DC and some stuff over in Montauk. There was this idea floating around about expanding the project, using these gifts to reconnect to the other side..." Sam explained.

"That's exactly what they did to me," Kali said as she slid off the table and moved closer toward him.

"They... I didn't think they could do it," Sam said in excitement as his breathing got harder.

"Oh man he can't die on us now," Dustin muttered. "They said they would find a way to access it thru the subjects' mind. They called it..." Owens said as his words became more frail and Joyce tried to keep him awake.

"They called it... the... Dreamscape..." he said as he looked toward the girl and muttered, "She... is connected to the... other side..." "shit," Mike muttered as Doctor Owens collapsed onto the floor. Joyce was there by his side as was Hopper and the two watched as the life began to fade from his eyes.

"Thank you... both of you... at least I did some good..." he said softly as the kids all watched him slowly fade away and then he breathed his last.

Joyce covered her mouth in disbelief as she started to cry and then cling to Hopper who still couldn't believe all this was happening.

Jane reached for Mike and held him close as the others just looked on in shock.

For a minute the entire clinic was silent as the group bowed their heads in respect for the fallen friend.

Carl Danner even felt regret though he didn't know him and wished he could have done more.

Joyce softly cried against Jim's shirt and he held her, knowing that the man who had helped Jane so much was now gone forever.

The sound of tires outside seemed to break their reverie as the group wiped their tears and heard footsteps approach the clinic.

They all stood up and waited to see who was arriving. Several armed men entered the tiny clinic first holding guns at the ready and Hopper instinctively guarded Joyce even as a tall well dressed black man entered the room.

He adjusted his white lab coat and then looked at the chaos which seemed to have ravaged the small cabin and finally rested his attention on the group of individuals huddled over a dead man.

"Evening folks," he said in a friendly manner as two more men guarded the door, "It looks like you all have had quite the rough night."

END OF CHAPTER FOUR

41. Chapter Five, synopsis

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE DREAMSCAPE

A deal is made with a powerful organization as everyone works together to help Will, and learn the secrets behind the Upside Down.

Author's note: if you think things are settling down for our heroes, we have only just gotten started. For those of you who are wanting a little more research into the big bad monsters I have introduced in the previous chapters, look up both via Wikipedia or Google. The shelled monster I haven't actually named yet but it is called a Bulette. And the monstrous Aboleth is a DND classic. This chapter is also chock full of revelations for our heroes so stay tuned, cause the best is yet to come!

42. Chapter Five, Prologue

Joyce Byers was stirring a fresh pot of soup.

She heard the sound of laughter coming from the backyard and reached for the blinds to look outside at her two boys playing in the backyard.

The leaves were falling, the sun was shining. It felt so right.

A hand touched her shoulder and she turned and saw the man she loved. "Bob," she said as she kissed and giggled.

"What? How is this possible? How are you here?" she asked as they embraced.

"Joyce... you don't know where we are do you?" Bob asked.

Suddenly his eyes seemed to grow darker. Joyce took a step back and touched the edge of the kitchen sink as she looked back outside to where her boys had been.

Instead she saw a horde of evil monsters running toward her house.

"Bob, what's going on?" Joyce asked nervously as she turned around and screamed, surprised to see that the former Radio Shack employee was now missing half his face. The grisly looking man reached for her throat as though to choke her as she ran toward the living room where she saw Doctor Owens sitting and drinking coffee.

"Thank goodness you're here," she began but then he turned his face to her and she saw he too was a walking corpse. The two undead men started scrabbling toward her and pushed her to the ground.

Will stood over her too, looking every bit as monstrous as they did.

"You killed us Joyce! You let your son go! You! It's your fault!" The voices rang in her head as they started to devour her flesh.

With a gasp she shot up from the small couch and grabbed the edge of the furniture and looked around. She was still at Lake Fortune.

The gentle rays of morning sun were beginning to enter the clinic as she looked across at some of the sleeping bags that the soldiers at brought for all the boys.

And near the entrance, she saw a red stain, the only reminder of where a good man had died last night.

"Good morning Missus Byers," a voice said as she looked toward the soldiers and saw the mysterious African American man walk toward her and offered her coffee.

"It doesn't feel like one," she admitted sourly as he sat down on the couch beside her and looked at all of the others who were asleep.

"From what Deputy Hopper tells me, you have been thru a lot in the last twenty-four hours. So let me be brief. Your son Will, he's still in danger," the man said.

"You mean from people like you," she countered.

"I seem to recall that last year you had a pretty good relationship with the scientists from Hawkins Lab. They were working to help Will," the man said.

She looked at him and sighed muttering, "Whats your point..?"

"Will is still connected to the other side, that dark dimension will forever stalk him unless we do something about it," he answered and gestured toward the Jeeps outside and said, "We have set up some special equipment at an old military installment not far from here. Look, all I'm asking is a few tests, to be sure your son is all right."

Joyce bit her lip and looked down at the sleeping boy that was against her oldest and she wasn't sure what to believe anymore. "Missus Byers, I know you don't trust us. But this is for your family. I don't see how you could lose anything," the man explained.

Joyce looked across the room now to where Hopper was standing and watching them talk. Although he didn't say anything, he gave a slight nod to say that he felt they needed to learn more about these men.

And the only way was to make a deal, and maybe help Will regain a

normal life, she thought.

"All right; yeah. We can run a few tests," Joyce decided.

The man smiled and shook her hand gently before remarking, "You won't regret this Missus Byers. And by the way, call me Malcolm."

43. Chapter Five, Part One

Jim Hopper didn't like what he was hearing, but he also wasn't sure if there was any way of the situation that would not cause a conflict.

The sudden arrival of Indiana's Army Reserve almost felt too convenient. Like all of the problems they had dealt with over the night were somehow connected to them.

But he wasn't about to voice his opinion especially surrounded by men with guns. First because of the fact that the scientist seemed genuinely interested in helping Will Byers. As far as he knew the young boy had never fully recovered from his experience in the Upside Down.

And now after this strange occurrence here on the lake, Hopper didn't really think that the boy was going to ever have a normal life.

Secondly he was careful to say a word because of his own adoptive daughter's safety. Jane had been clinging to his arm ever since the soldiers arrived and he knew why. She wasn't about to let them take her again.

And the way the man in charge, Malcolm Stroude; looked at her Hopper was sure that the man knew something about the girl's sorted past.

Or perhaps it had something to do with the newcomer, the one that claimed to have a connection with Jane from Chicago. Pretty sure I sure would like to hear her whole story, Hopper thought.

Joyce kept her two boys close as the guards guided them out the door, Malcolm gave a parting smile to him and Jane and then the clinic was empty of soldiers.

Hopper watched as they climbed into the army Jeep and sighed deeply, wondering what they were really up to and how the hell he was going to find out.

"How could you let them take Will?" Mike asked softly, trying to hide

his anger.

Hopper turned to the group of children that all looked puzzled and bewildered and he muttered, "It's not like I had a choice kid. You all should get back to your cabins. The rangers are going to try and salvage the rest of this summer the best they can."

Inwardly though he was just as upset as they were because of how easily the armed men had taken the Byers away. There has to be something that can be done, he reasoned.

The group of kids didn't seem to want to listen to him but did so reluctantly anyway as the former sheriff shooed them away and then turned his attention to the only ones who stayed, Jane and her strange sister.

"We can help fight this battle," Kali suggested. "I think so too, but the first thing we need to do is figure out exactly what they did to you," Hopper replied.

The Indian girl looked nervous about the idea but the stout doctor reassured her, "All we are going to do is inject you with a little bit of steroids, it should boost your adrenaline and help you to recall everything that happened to you. If you'll just lay back we can get started."

Kali looked toward Jane who nodded and said, "I'll be right here."

"There are a few added chemicals as well, all designed to jumpstart your memories and your latent abilities," Danner explained.

Hopper crossed his arms and watched as the teen girl laid down on the clinic table and then the doctor prepared the serum.

As he did so he heard more tire tracks approaching and he muttered, "Did they forget something?"

Instead he saw three familiar teenagers enter the clinic, all of them looking disheveled and out of breath.

"You Three look like you've been thru hell," Hopper said waiting for one of them to give an explanation.

"We saw them take Will. Hopper, I don't know what they are planning but it's nothing good," Nancy said.

"We found this," Steve added as he took out a small booklet and passed it to the former sheriff.

Hopper glanced at the peculiar symbol on the book cover and opened it to read even as Danner finished administering the drugs.

"Shit, is this for real?" Hopper asked to which all three teens nodded.

"What does it say?" Jane asked.

"I'm not exactly a science expert," Jim said as he passed the brochure to the doctor and added, "But it looks to me like this is human experimentation."

The sketches showed young children almost the same age as Jane or Kali being attached to some sort of massive ring device alongside equations he hardly understood.

"It looks like a battery of some kind," Danner admitted even as Kali looked at the mathematics and then fell back on the table and seemed to writhe in pain.

"What's wrong with her?" Billy asked in confusion.

"Hold her down, it's just a side affect," Danner urged them.

Hopper did as he was told, his eyes never faltering from the disturbing images and wondering, if it was indeed a battery... then what were they trying to power and why?

44. Chapter Five, Part Two

Mud flew up in their peripheral vision as the Jeep made its way across the backroads of Lake Fortune, rocking back and forth on the grimy roads as it did so.

In the backseat of the cramped vehicle, Joyce held onto the hands of both of her sons, knowing that each turn they made took them farther from their friends and closer to a very precarious situation.

She didn't want to think of what these men really wanted to do to Will, but another part of her had a curiosity that needed to be satisfied.

Why were these soldiers so fixated on him? Was there truly something they could do to help her son recover from all the trauma he had experienced?

She caught sight of the military installation as they drove deeper into the mountains, from the moss growing on the side of the facility she guessed that the place had not been used in quite some time.

What sort of old fashioned equipment could they use here that would benefit my son, she thought.

As they crossed an older bridge, she got a better look at it confirming that for the most part the base seemed abandoned.

The Jeep came to a stop near the west wall of the base, a few makeshift tents appeared to already have been erected just last night to House the incoming troops and the soldiers opened the door, encouraging the Byers to step out.

Joyce and the boys did so reluctantly, their shoes sinking into the dry mud as they stood there and got a look at the tall walls, the place almost feeling like a prison.

"I know it isn't much to look at," Malcolm commented as he got out of his own vehicle and walked over to them. "Back in its hey day this place was a great training facility for both the Army and the

Marines."

"When was that? The Dark Ages?" Jonathan quipped, nudging his younger brother and trying to lighten the mood. The Professor placed his hands firmly on Will's shoulders and smiled jovially toward all of them before commenting, "If its all right I think it would be best to start treatment immediately."

Joyce nodded and knelt down to give her son a hug. Smiling weakly Will said, "Don't worry. I'm sure I will Be back in a flash."

The men led him away toward one of the larger portions of the base north of them and Jonathan tugged at his mom's hand and remarked, "How sure are you that this is a good idea?"

She frowned and crossed her arms uncomfortably before answering, "I'm not."

Inside the old facility, the dim lights flickered to life as the soldiers escorted Will down a long bland corridor and he immediately felt cold.

At first he felt the instinct to shiver and feel afraid, but then he closed his eyes and remembered some of the horrors he had faced over the past two years and immediately felt calm.

"We're going to take a sample of your blood first," the tall black man said as they came to a door and he added, "Please get into the scrubs we have available."

Closing the door to provide Will some privacy the boy slipped out of his clothes and looked about at some of the older pictures that once decorated the small examination room.

He took a brief look at each of the old black and white photos and then got into the scrubs and looked at the mirror.

Ever since he had been trapped in that dark dimension, Will had always felt different. Now it was time for him to finally find out why.

The soldiers returned and guided him to another equally opaque room where the Professor was waiting along with several nurses who

were preparing some sort of equipment.

"Reminds me of the dentist's office," Will said nervously. The tall man gestured for him to get in the chair and then carefully strapped him down.

"What... what are these for?" He asked.

"The treatment can have some side effects. There is no need to worry though, we have everything designed for your protection," Malcolm answered as he finished the last strap.

Will nodded and then watched as the nurse drew his blood, trying not to panic at the sight of needles.

"Will, I'm going to ask you a series of questions designed to help awaken your subconscious. These will help us determine just how deeply connected to the Far Plane you are," Malcolm stated.

Will stared at the doctor and nodded reluctantly, as the man got onto a small rolling stool and came closer.

"Do you remember the first time you saw yourself in the mirror and you didn't know who you were?" Malcolm asked.

Will wasn't sure what to make of the question but nodded and said, "It was Christmas... back in 83. I... coughed up some sort of slug..."

"The first time you returned from the other side?" He asked.

"Yeah... I didn't know it but the Shadow Monster had already tried to infect me," Will said softly.

"What about since then? Since you've been going to camp here?" Malcolm asked. "I... I don't know."

"Did you see the other side when you almost drowned?" Malcolm asked.

"No... maybe... I don't think so..." Will admitted as he closed his eyes and saw the dark images beginning to surface.

One of the nurses showed Malcolm some sort of reading from the blood and he nodded and remarked, "Fascinating."

"Will... I need you to focus on this next question very carefully..." Malcolm said as he paused and stared hard at the boy before asking, "Where are you right now?"

Will closed his eyes, seeing phantom wolves and strange amphibian monsters lurking from beneath the lake and all searching for him. He felt like he was sinking, drifting into the shadows more and more with each passing moment. "What did... what did you do to me?" Will asked.

"Will, answer me," the Professor snarled.

"I... I can't feel anything..." Will stammered as he started thrashing on the chair and the malevolent forces began to swirl about on his legs and arms.

Like a black oily slime, it covered his body and seemed to fill his lungs as he found it difficult to breathe. It surrounded his vision, froze his blood. He was certain he was dying.

And then he was back, surrounded by the nurses as the Professor finished his paper work and smiled and saying, "Go back and get some rest, Will. We've made a lot of progress in a short period of time."

He nodded gasping for breath as he looked about the room, ghosts of the pain he felt still lingering like a mist.

They guided him down the corridor again, and he felt a little relief when he thought about being with his mom and brother again but instead they took him back to the same exam room.

"When do I get to see my mom?" Will asked even as they closed the door and locked it. He slammed his fist against the door and then looked over toward the mirror.

If he looked at his image hard enough, he almost didn't recognize himself anymore. Angrily he hit the mirror, and unexpectedly shattered the glass.

He looked down at his fist, trying not to be in shock as he realized that he didn't even scratch the surface of the skin.

Just what is happening to me?

In another room, the tall black man tapped his finger on a security monitor which showed everything that the young boy was doing and then leaned back and turned to the men under his command.

"It's worse than we thought," Malcolm said grimly as he sighed and then remarked, "We need the others."

"Why didn't we just apprehend them at the cabin with the boy?" One soldier asked. "Too risky. They need to come to us, and the way they care... it won't be long," Malcolm remarked as he stood up and said, "Prepare the machine."

45. Chapter Five, Part Three

The room was quiet as the Indian girl woke up and she immediately realized that she was alone.

Everything about her felt familiar and yet completely different than it had been moments ago, as though she were merely experiencing the world thru a lens.

Kali steps onto the cold lifeless floor and looked about feeling a strange presence touch her hand then grab her.

A flash of light clouded her vision and she found herself staring at Jane.

"Kali... can you see me?" Jane asked as she continued to squeeze her hand. She saw the worried expressions on all of their faces and nodded weakly, realizing she was somehow sleepwalking.

"I need you to listen, you are experiencing what is normally called a lucid dream. Don't lose sight of me and tell me what you see," Jane explained as the others around them faded away.

Kali looked about at the lifeless world she seemed tethered to and said, "It feels like... they know I'm here. Like they want me connected."

"The Absoleth?" Jane asked.

"I don't know... but it's calling to me, like a whisper at times and then sometimes it's screaming in my ears," Kali answered as she walked out to the dead world.

All across the landscape of Lake Fortune seemed different and altered, though still somehow alive.

In the real world Hopper and Jane were following the girl, eager to see what she might unravel. Nancy and Steve stood on the steps of the clinic uncertain what to make of the whole thing.

"Tell her to explain everything she senses about this place," Hopper

told Jane as the two girls seemed to be wandering across the Camp like the blind leading the blind.

The two girls got giggles and sneers from some of the others that were performing their morning routines with the rangers but one glare from Hopper made them all quiet down.

"There's... something here... like a plant," Kali said as she tried to reach for it.

The group formed a circle around Jane and her sister as the girl seemed to be grasping at air one moment and then the next something formed into her hand.

"How the hell is she doing that?" Steve asked in shock as the tree grew down to the ground and inserted itself amid the soil.

"I've seen her do this trick before, it's not real," Jane explained softly.

Nancy reached out to touch it, grabbing at the trunk and remarking, "It feels pretty real to me."

Jane's eyes widened in surprise and she touched it as well and realized that it was in fact very real.

"I remember she told me something about this..." Jane said softly as the girl continued to seem to wander aimlessly.

"She said they were trying to expand her abilities... make her stronger," Jane explained. "Like making a dream real?" Steve asked softly as they all continued to stare at the strange plant that had appeared out of nowhere.

"This is crazy, how is any of this possible?" Nancy muttered.

"Those wolves we fought last night... one of them disappeared the moment she woke up," Hopper realized.

"So.. she was controlling them?" Nancy asked in shock as they turned to where the two girls were walking toward the road.

"Sounds to me like she is dangerous," Billy added as he exited the

clinic and crossed his arms. Of all the newcomers he had been the least helpful to trying to help the situation.

As Hargrove had put it an hour earlier, he was thru with all this shit. But then he had found out his sister was here at the lake and his whole attitude seemed to change.

Now he was trying his best to understand the crazy shit going on around him.

Nancy knew that he could be right especially after what had happened to Sam Owens the night before.

Was the monster that had roamed the woods of Lake Fortune also an apparition? How could these soldiers even think that this was okay?

"Someone is coming," Jane called out as she tugged Kali and snapped her out of her reverie.

Steve looked down at the plant and saw it seem to fade into the air as the Indian girl was brought back to the real world and then heard a car approaching.

On the side of the cruiser Nancy spotted the familiar symbol of the Hawkins Police Department and realized it could only be one person.

Sure enough as Jane and Kali got out of the way the car stopped and Phillip Mitchell stepped out and tipped his hat.

The girls ran back over to Hopper as the sheriff walked up and said, "Morning folks."

"Phil... what are you doing here?" Hopper asked. The man looked at all of the kids that were watching their move and then gestured toward the ranger's office before saying, "Let's go talk in private."

The two men walked into the ranger office and the Sheriff closed the door to one of the break rooms before leaning against the counter and crossing his arms.

"I'm hoping you have a good explanation for all this Hop," Mitchell remarked.

"I'm not really sure what you are talking about," Jim admitted as he saw one of the Headmasters give him a suspicious look and then Mitchell remarked, "Playing dumb? How about we start with you impersonating an officer of the law... Deputy."

"Shit," he muttered as he realized that one of the rangers had called in.

"Yeah real shit Hopper. Imagine my surprise when I get a call saying that one of my deputies is out here at the lake investigating the bear attacks and that someone got mauled and killed by a grizzly last night during the storm!" Phil remarked.

"My daughter was coming to Camp, I felt that I needed to be sure everything was on the up and up here," Hopper explained.

"Yeah that's a good lie but I'm not buying it. Your girlfriend seemed like she knew a bit more about this whole situation. Maybe I can haul her in and question her too," Mitchell sighed and then added, "Shit Hop. I just don't get how you always run head first onto trouble."

"I had good intentions. If you give me a minute to explain.." Jim muttered.

"You can give me all the answers I need when we get back to Hawkins." Phil said as he gestured for Hopper to turn around.

"You don't have to do this," he tried to say even as Mitchell slapped handcuffs on him.

Outside all the kids looked on in shock as the sheriff led Hopper toward the parked car. Jane clenched her fists, wanting desperately to do something but her adoptive father just gave a slight shake of the head.

In another minute the car was pulling out of the lake and the kids watched in disbelief as it disappeared almost as quickly as it came.

"Shit," Kali commented. The two girls looked at the three older teens and Nancy bit her lip gently, uncertain what their next move would be.

46. Chapter Five, Part Four

The foursome actually chose to head toward the portion of the camp where the older cabins stood, partially to give them time to relax from being around the crowds and mostly to plan what their next move was going to be.

Dustin and Lucas apologized to each other for the fight they had the earlier evening and Mike and Max tried to remember everything that Doctor Owens and El had told them about the Upside Down.

It was their only chance to save Will Mike realized.

"It's a time like this I wish we had a manual for that stupid game," Lucas muttered.

"It's a strategic role play," Dustin corrected him. Lucas gave him a glare that told the other boy now was not the time for any sort of argument.

"Come on guys, Will is counting on us!" Mike said even as they all heard footsteps approaching.

Max peeled out the window and then said excitedly, "It's Max and Kali!"

The two girls entered the room and everyone's spirits seemed to lift a little.

Maybe with the two sisters using their gifts together, they stood a chance of saving the day.

But when they noticed the serious expression on both girl's faces, Mike immediately knew something had gone horribly wrong.

"Hopper, he's been taken by that new sheriff," El explained as she clung to Mike and tried to control her emotions. The small mood ring he had gifted her showed how quickly her emotions were changing and the boys looked at each in surprise wondering what had happened.

"Jesus. How are we going to do this without Hopper?" Dustin asked nervously.

"You have us, and my powers are stronger than they have ever been before," Kali reasoned.

"You guys are forgetting one thing, that military base is like on the other side of the lake," Max pointed out with a sigh.

"Yeah even if we left now I'm sure they would finish what they are doing to Will way before hand," Lucas agreed.

"Can't you make things appear with your mind and make us a car?" Mike asked the goth girl. "It doesn't work that way," Kali admitted.

Eleven squeezed her sister's hand and then explained, "Anything that she can create is going to be from the Upside Down, dark and dangerous."

"That sucks," Max agreed.

"How in the world is that useful!" Lucas growled. "I think they are trying to connect our two sides, like a gateway," Kali replied.

"We need to get to that base, all the answers are there," Mike reasoned.

"But without Hopper?" Max muttered softly, uncertain what to do.

Behind where El and Kali has entered they heard a noise and then saw a group of teenagers enter the abandoned cabin.

"Nancy?" Mike asked in surprise.

"Hey kiddo," she said with a smile as Steve and Billy came behind her.

The kids all viewed the boys with a bit more wariness than Nancy, Max's brother especially because of his tendency to be a bully.

And most of them had already heard about Steve dropping out of school shortly before graduation.

"They're here to help," Nancy reassured them all.

"Help?" Max repeated skeptically as she stared at her troublesome older brother.

"Yeah, after all the shit I seen this past night i want to get these bastards back," Billy answered firmly.

"The rangers will never just let us all leave with you," Mike pointed out.

"I think I might have a solution for that," Steve chimes in as he smiled and turned to Dustin remarking, "Care to make a few pipe bombs?"

Halfway across the lake on a backroad heading toward Hawkins, Hopper sat in the back of a cop car; a place he hadn't seen in about thirty years.

"Is this really necessary Phil?" Jim asked with a long sigh as they took another turn and went further and further from the camp.

"Look, I don't like this any more than you do," Mitchell answered as he seemed to listen intently to his scanner and Hopper muttered, "You really have no idea what you are doing do you?"

"What do you mean?" Phil asked.

"Look, I get that you wanted to become sheriff to try and get yourself a seat on the city council. But pardon my French, you are doing a shitty job. I'm sitting here trying to explain to you that bigger things are going on than some stupid five and dime store being robbed Phil! There are lives at stake and there are powerful people who mean to harm those kids!"

Mitchell stopped the car and then adjusted his mirror before commenting, "Look, you can keep hammering all you want about your conspiracy bull crap. But I haven't seen one shred of hard facts to back it up."

Hopper looked down at the floor of the car and then muttered, "Go to Fort Richards. That's where they took Joyce Byers and her kids. That's where you'll get all the proof you need."

Mitchell seemed to consider it for a moment and then nodded his head softly before remarking, "Fine. We can take a detour. But this better be no shit Hop or you will be in a hell of a lot more trouble."

Hopper didn't say anything but smirked slightly, hoping that his gamble was going to pay off.

47. Chapter Five, Part Five

Joyce held her young sons hand as the soldiers brought them to a lower level of the military installation. It seemed from the wandering pipes and steel walls that this was originally meant as a shelter of some sort and she couldn't help but wonder when this was built.

The metallic doors made a loud groaning sound as the men pushed them open and Joyce covered her mouth in shock as she looked at the strange equipment that had been set up in the large bunker.

From the shape of the device she knew immediately that it was meant to allow a human being to be strapped in at the hands and feet, spread eagle and raised above a peculiarly marked oval pedestal. The ring itself seemed to be comprised of small electrical outlets that pulsed and connected to each other as another thinner ring circled the main component.

"Now I know that this looks a bit scary," Malcolm remarked as he walked toward the Byers.

"But I'm afraid radical means are the only option that we have left if we want to save your son," the doctor added as he smiled menacingly toward Will.

"What exactly does it do?" Joyce asked as her son squeezed her hand a bit tighter, perhaps fearful of the response the Professor might give.

"Our tests showed that he shares a bond with the other side, even if he may not be aware of it. The best means of extraction will be to power that connection to its limit, to force the gateway to become stronger and then once its established we can destroy the core itself," Malcolm responded as he knelt down to look Will in the eye. "It's more than just your son we are trying to save here. Missus Byers."

"And... there's really no other way is there?" Joyce asked as Will muttered, "Mom, please don't do this."

She got on her knees and touched his face, trying not to cry as she remembered how many times she had almost lost him already. "I

can't keep thinking that every moment with you might be the last. It's killing me, each time I want you to be ok and each time this happens. We have to try baby... we just have to," she told him gently as she messed up his hair.

Will still showed fear in his eyes but nodded reluctantly and then Malcolm gestured for the men to fire up the machine.

"You can take off everything except your underwear," the scientists told him as they guided him toward a small strip of plastic sheets that separated the main room from the machine itself.

Joyce started to nervously bite her nails as she watched from the observatory deck and muttered, "Doesn't anybody have a cigarette?"

Inside the bunker, the nurses swabbed Will's chest and placed nodes on his skin even as they got him to lay back.

One of the scientists pulled Malcolm aside as they finished the set up and muttered, "This may not even work Sir. We need the other two."

"Keep an eye on the exterior cameras. I know they will be here soon. And get this started," Stroude snarled angrily as he went to the deck where Joyce was waiting.

"You don't have to be here for this," he commented.

She thought about the horrendous ordeal they had gone they to exorcise the dangerous monster from Will last year and shook her head firmly.

"I'm not going anywhere," Joyce decided.

Malcolm shrugged as he went to the control board. "Ladies and gentlemen, hold onto your butts.." he remarked as he flipped the switch.

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Above ground, Jonathan Byers had been feeling antsy since they had arrived at the strange military encampment and now that his mom and brother were being led to some sort of experimentation room he

was even more nervous.

As he sat cross legged on the small bed that he had been given and looked toward the large facility on the north side of the camp he felt his heart skip a beat when a powerful roaring noise pierced the air.

As the sound got louder and louder the teenager found himself covering his ears to try and stop the pain it caused him and then watched in amazement as all the power in the encampment went out save for the main building.

The place where they took Will, he thought as he hopped off his bed and ran outside.

Some of the soldiers also came outside to see what was going on as the noise seemed to fluctuate between loud and then almost a whisper.

Finally it stopped altogether as Jonathan walked closer toward the facility, eager to find out if the noise had something to do with his younger brother.

From the gate that led into the camp he heard another more familiar sound, a horn honking and it made him turn his head to see a police cruiser sitting there waiting to be let in.

Jonathan narrowed his eyes and looked at the side of the car to see a familiar logo and realized it had to be Hopper.

Running toward the gate, Jonathan realized that the middle aged man was not alone but also had the new sheriff in tow and both of them were getting out of car to look at the strange scene that was beginning to occur around the main encampment.

Jonathan turned around to see what was the cause for their expression and felt his heart sink as he saw a strange almost otherworldly cloud begin to form near the facility.

"Phil... you need to give me my gun back," Hopper told the sheriff.

Mitchell only nodded reluctantly as Jonathan realized that something quite unnatural was happening and they were about to head straight

into it.

48. Chapter Five, Part Six

It was nearly lunch when the first explosion went off.

Mike had just taken the first bite of his chicken sandwich when he heard it and he tried to act surprised.

The rest of the kids in the mess hall seemed shaken by the sudden loud boom and the male Headmaster immediately dropped the magazine he was reading.

The small explosion was a mixture of materials that Steve had made from the construction quarry, and thankfully had been smart enough to bring along.

Dustin and the older teen were scurrying through the woods laying down the explosives at different spots all around Lake Fortune, and each one served the same purpose: a distraction for the group of kids to get out of the camp without raising too much attention.

The last one was going to be especially potent, Mike thought as he followed the group toward a backroom of the kitchen where the other kids were waiting to hear that everything was all clear.

"This Place is bat shit crazy," he heard one kid say.

Mike knew that he was absolutely right about that but probably not for the reasons any of them knew.

Lucas huddled next to him and remarked; "When the big one goes off we move out."

Mike nodded as they waited there, listening for the next in the series of five that Steve had made.

Placing the dangerous bomb in his backpack, Steve slowly walked amid the scattered forest with Dustin in tow and remarked, "I bet you never thought this was how you were going to spend your summer vacation."

Dustin didn't say anything as they kept moving toward the closed off

portion of the campground where the group had made a secret hideout in one of the cabins and Steve turned to the younger boy and asked, "Cat got your tongue? I thought we were tight."

Dustin glared at the older boy and snapped back, "You really going to pretend everything is okay here? It's no wonder Nancy broke up with you."

"Harsh," Steve said as they arrived at the cabin and he carefully placed the backpack down. "You know, I didn't ask for any of that shit to happen. I had my whole life ahead of me," Steve remarked.

"But drugs man? That's not cool," Dustin argued. Steve's hand twitched and he turned to the younger kid and said, "It was only a couple of times. Look, I lost everything man! My girl, my whole life went down the drains! I had no mojo. It was a shitty mistake, but I'm trying to do better."

"Is that why you came out here?" Dustin asked as they carefully rigged the bomb to go off in five minutes.

"Look as much as you turds think I'm a jerk I really do care. I want to help, that's all that matters," Harrington explained.

Dustin didn't say a word as they left the cabin and started back toward where Billy and Nancy were waiting in the Jeep parked near the main office and before they reached the Jeep Dustin muttered, "Steve?"

The older boy turned about to look at him and the curly haired boy said, "I'm glad you came."

Steve smirked and the two of them rushed toward the Jeep even as the last explosive went off.

When Mike and Lucas heard the loud boom the boys shot up and waited for the other ranger to leave the kitchen.

"Oh man we're under attack!" One kid shouted anxiously as confusion began to take over the mess hall.

The two easily made their way out as the rangers rushed toward the

shattered cabin and Nancy started up the engine.

Max was the last one to get there even as Billy started to drive away from the campgrounds and Lucas opened the door for her. "I don't think there are enough seatbelts," Dustin said as they started to drive away from the campground.

Billy gave him an icy glare as they all scooped together and before he could give a sarcastic reply, Lucas chimes in, "God damn it Dustin we just blew up half the camp! Grow some balls and shut up!"

Dustin slouched a little as they drove faster and Billy couldn't help but to smile.

Maybe Sinclair isn't so bad after all he thought with a smirk.

49. Chapter Five, Part Seven

The strange purple and black clouds that seemed to form into a swirling vortex of unearthly energy gently cascaded like a whirlpool in and out of reality as the machine Malcolm had Will strapped to seemed to be faltering.

"We need to shut it off," one nurse said as they noticed energy readings were off the charts.

Malcolm nodded reluctantly, surprised that his calculations had been so far off.

"This should be working," he admitted even as he looked toward the young boy. There appeared be little or no change in him at all. Above he heard the soft tap against the glass at the observation level and he knew that the mother was going to express more concerns.

This is not going the way I planned, he thought sourly as he let them give the equipment a rest and he walked back out of the bunker.

Even as he arrived near the main stairs another sound from the floor above made him pause and look up, wondering what it could be. Switching his gait, the tall dark man arrived at the main lobby of the research facility to see two men standing there waiting to be seen.

"Sir, these two officers were wanting a word with you," the soldier explained even as the man on the right showed his badge.

"I'm Sheriff Phillip Mitchell, this is my acting deputy Jim Hopper. If you don't mind we need to talk in private," the man said in a tone that meant he didn't want to be questioned.

"Gentlemen, there's no need to be hostile. This is a restricted zone however and I'm afraid I'm going to have to ask you both to leave," Stroude replied calmly.

"Like hell you are," Hopper snarled even as the sheriff gestured for him to calm down.

"My partner here told me that you are treating a young boy here

named William Byers. And that his family is here with him. If it's all right with you, we just wanted to talk with them."

As the scientist passed by the two guards to where the two officers stood he clasped his hands behind his back and said firmly, "I'm afraid that won't be possible. First of all any sort of treatment we do here would be for those connected to the family directly. And secondly it would be with their consent."

Hopper sighed in irritation as the tall man prepared to walk down stairs again and then Mitchell said, "Look we aren't leaving until we talk to the mother at least."

Malcolm gritted his teeth and turned toward them saying, "I really didn't want to have to do this but you leave me no other choice. Disarm them."

Before either of the two newcomers could make a move the two trained soldiers took them by surprise and pushed them to the ground, taking their weapons in one fell swoop.

The scientist stood over them and smiled before commenting, "As much as I wanted this to work where no one got hurt; you are starting to make things difficult. But maybe this works out better for everyone? I believe I recognize one of you.."

He took another look at Hopper's face and muttered, "Yeah. You were the one that got chummy with Doctor Owens. How is he these days?"

"Dead. Your Dreamscape killed him," Hopper shot back.

"Shame. The man was a good patsy. If things went south here I knew he could be the one to answer for it," Malcom said with a shrug as they were led toward the bunker.

"And by the way if you really wanted to come see our progress in action all you action all you had to do was ask. What we're doing here is revolutionary after all."

"Yeah, I bet," the former sheriff said sourly. As they were led toward the bunker depths, Hopper started tapping on a small device off and on, sending a secret message to Jonathan up above.

The miniature walkie-talkie was called a beeper and using Morse Code Hopper was telling Jonathan where they were being taken.

Jonathan quickly wrote down the code as he received it and then looked toward the small control panel he was monitoring.

The other soldiers had all decided to head for the main building because of the eerie phenomenon but that also meant the three some had a chance to make a plan.

"The sheriff and I will go in. As soon as I give a signal, start the alarm across the entire base. Raise as much hell as you can," Hopper said giving the teen the other pager.

As the signal came in, Jonathan stared at the control panel, wondering if the power would return or not for him to even do anything helpful.

That was when he heard a commotion again at the front gates and Jonathan looked up to see a large army Jeep smash thru the gate.

He ran out to see what was going on and couldn't help but smile as he spotted Nancy in the passenger seat.

As the Jeep came to a stop the girl got out of the car and embraced him, kissing him without even waiting.

Jonathan was surprised by her new attitude but didn't turn it away even as he heard a voice behind her chime in, "Gross. Get a room."

He looked up and saw the kids from the camp climb out along with Steve Harrington and a punk girl and teen boy he didn't recognize.

"What are you even doing here?" Jonathan asked Nancy still holding her even with Steve glaring at him.

"Saving the day, duh," Lucas said even as the power began to return to the base.

"Shit that's my cue," Jonathan realized as he grabbed Nancy's hand and pointed toward the building he had just come out of.

"How can we help?" Mike asked as they looked at all of the intricate circuitry.

"Hopper is inside the bunker looking to get my mom and Will out. He wanted me to set off an alarm when I got a signal... which was about five minutes ago," Jonathan explained.

"Well don't waste time! Get it done!" The redhead girl told him.

Jonathan looked toward the grid and then just started turning things off and on unsure what would work and what wouldn't.

Then with a resounding roar the strange noise he had heard earlier started up again and Jane suddenly fell down to the ground in pain.

"El?" Mike asked as his crush started to convulse in shock.

"What is that?" Steve asked as he covered his ears.

"The Dreamscape," the punk girl said in an emotionless voice as she raised her hand and as if from thin air a fire arm appeared in it.

"All of you will come with me," she said.

"What the hell?" The boy with the Mohawk said as he tried to grab the gun from her.

Immediately she shot him in the stomach and he fell back causing both Nancy and the redhead to scream. "Billy!"

"I don't want to hurt you," the girl admitted as she seemed frozen, almost possessed.

Mike raised his hands defensively even as the noise subsided and El got up from the ground with blood dripping from both of her nostrils.

Weakened, she looked at her adoptive sister and muttered, "Kali? Why?"

"It is not my choice sister.. they gave me new power yes, but also turned me into a weapon," the punk girl said icily as she kept the gun trained toward all of them.

"That's What The Dreamscape really is isn't it, trying to control these abilities?" Steve realized as he knew that had to be why they had taken an interest in Will.

"What are you going to do to my brother?" Jonathan asked.

Once again devoid of all emotion the girl tilted her head toward the bunker and answered, "Why don't you come see for yourself?"

50. Chapter Five, Part Eight

Tension filled the air of the small observation lounge as the soldiers brought Hopper and the new sheriff in through the door and Joyce immediately realized something terrible was happening.

"Hopper?" she asked quietly even as Professor Stroude entered behind them and got the two men to relax on the nearby couch.

"Missus Byers, it would seem we have a few more people who are concerned about Will. You should have invited them to join us back at the camp, and then this little reunion wouldn't be quite so awkward," the tall man said as Joyce rushed over to where Hopper was at and he gave her a roguish grin.

"Sorry, just trying to save the world like usual," he admitted as Mitchell placed his hands on the glass and looked down at where Will was at in the room just beyond them.

"What is the meaning of all of this?" The sheriff asked in frustration.

Before the scientist had a chance to respond, one of his men entered the door again and softly gave a report.

Malcolm seemed a bit surprised but also happy to hear it as he raised a finger toward the sheriff and replied, "It looks like we have a few more stragglers from the lake. You people really are predictable."

"Get them onto the exam floor, and then get those girls connected," Malcolm told his men.

Joyce clenched her fists and ran toward him to punch him in the side and the tall man looked at her with amusement.

"I really don't understand you people. I sit here and explain how I'm trying to protect the whole god damn planet and yet you keep trying to get in my way," Stroude said as he grabbed her arm and twisted it.

"I told you before I was going to save your son, but I never said he would survive the experience. Sometimes the only solution is the one that we don't want to face," he said coldly.

"No! Will!" Joyce said angrily even as he pushed her back to where the two men were seated.

Deeper in the bunker, the girl with the strange purple hair forced the group of kids into the room where Will was still strapped to the strange machine.

Mike wanted to call out to his friend but at the moment he was too scared to say a word. Reluctantly he followed the soldiers toward the center of the room even as Kali turned Eleven.

"I'm sorry sister," she said with tears in her eyes. El had been waiting until she knew that she got a chance to use her gifts, and as the soldiers took Kali to another similar machine the curly haired girl raised her hands and started to attempt to twist the metal apart.

As the boys watched in fascination they could see the struggle that covered El's face and as blood trickled from her nose the girl came to a sudden realization. Her abilities were not working.

A soft noise above them caused all of them to look up and a voice called over the intercom, "There isn't any need to waste your time Jane. As long as I keep this signal going you won't be able to do anything unless I tell you to. So take a break and welcome to the Dreamscape."

Eleven looked about in confusion as she saw her sister willingly submit to being placed in the machine and then turned her attention toward Mike, feeling scared.

"Trippin'," Steve muttered as he and Jonathan and Nancy were put near to where Mike and his two friends stood.

Lowering her hands in defeat El heard the ringing again and almost felt like falling over. But then it seemed to subside as she was hurled to the third and final piece of equipment and she heard the voice of the malicious scientist, "You have no idea how long I have been waiting for this."

Eleven felt a strange tinge as the device was locked onto her wrists and then looked toward Will and Kali, both of whom almost seemed

lifeless.

"Power It up, maximum strength," Malcolm said sternly. For a brief second, she felt nothing and then suddenly a pain like intense needles poking thru her entire body.

Mike, Dustin and Lucas watched without knowing fully what was happening as it seemed a swirl of energy was beginning to form between the three different pieces of equipment and Will and Kali started to convulse as the strange energy shot thru their body.

"We need to do something," Jonathan said as he clenched his fists and then rushed toward the nearest soldier.

He shoved the man to the ground and started punching him even as Steve and Nancy also tried to pry the door open but nothing seemed to be working.

The swirling bright energy grew larger as it connected the machines together and El started to scream and scream until a darkness covered her body.

A mysterious otherworldly noise emerged from the portal as the soldiers struggled to get Jonathan off of them as Joyce above slammed against the glass.

"You have to stop this!" Joyce shouted angrily as she tried to grab ahold of Malcolm.

"You still don't understand, none of you do. Each of these children are infected with a disease that must be killed. Their sacrifice is necessary to help save the entire freaking world.

So sit your ass down and shut up!" Stroude called out even as he heard one of his techs say, "Sir we are having a problem. The girl, Jane Ives. She is fighting the process."

The scientist looked down at the growing portal where unusual spaces and colors formed and disappeared in the blink of an eye and saw the girl trying against all odds to fight using her special powers.

He was in awe as the girl was able to push back the power from the

massive vortex that seethed with energy and shouted, "Raise the level past its limit!"

But even as the techs struggled to listen to him it seemed that the girl was still having success.

"This isn't over, not by a long shot," Malcolm said as he turned to one of the guards and took his fire arm.

Pressing down on the intercom he pointed the weapon toward Hopper.

"Listen up Jane, you've got a choice to make. Either start playing nice with the other kids or your dear old dad will be on the floor bleeding out. I'm going to give you until the count of three," Stroude snarled.

She hesitated for a moment as long ethereal tendrils began to snake out from the portal, the beastly image of the Absoleth barely in sight as the hole grew larger. She looked first toward Jonathan who was being shoved down and put under the heel of a soldier's boot and then toward Will and Kali, their eyes aglow with some celestial power she knew courses thru her veins as well.

Then she heard Hopper, he spoke clearer than she had ever heard anything. "You listen to me Jane! Don't worry about me you here? You finish this son of a bitch and do it right," he shouted over the intercom.

Closing her eyes she focused on the man near the control panel and then screamed even louder ready to rip him apart.

Malcolm saw the glass on the observatory deck begin to crack and then hesitated. Hopper laughed and used the opportunity to tackle the man to the ground.

Eleven screamed louder as she felt the bonds on her wrists begin to grow hot and the dark portal of energy changed and merged into one of light.

She was not going to lose.

Malcolm and Hopper struggled on the carpet as the soldiers kept

Mitchell and Joyce at bay and then amid the chaos everyone in the bunker heard a single gun shot.

No one moved for what seemed to be eternity and then, after the silence came another scream. Joyce pushed Hopper over and looked down at his chest to see where the bullet had gone thru and then shouted in agony even louder as the scientist got up and looked down at the man who had tried to attack him.

"No... no... no... no no no no no!" Joyce shouted angrily as the noise from the machine reached a piercing shrill.

Jane's eyes opened, filled with rage, vengeance and a desire to end it all and she clenched her fists so hard that she pierced her skin in her palm.

With every ounce of energy in her body she sent a shockwave of power straight toward the deck where Malcolm stood.

What followed next happened in an instant but to everyone there it seemed like forever.

Jonathan fell backwards as the surge of power struck the two other machines, Nancy reached for him but was pulled back by Steve even as the group of kids huddled closer and listened to the ringing grow louder.

The Absoleth disappeared as the portal shifted to a glowing light brighter than the sun and Stroude felt his body began to convulse.

"It's not possible..." he said with a laugh as it seemed like everything had gone according to his plan.

Then like a piece of paper being taken to the fire, Jane pushed a little harder and made the man burst into flames.

Malcolm shouted in horror as the machines went faster and faster, cackling and screaming madly as his body disintegrated and then the light grew so bright that Mike and the others had to cover their ears.

Like a whirling bolt of lightning the noise canvased the entire room and filled it with light and those standing there felt every part of

their body feel jolted like a rocket or a theme park ride.

Then at last, everything returned to a calm almost serene state and Nancy was the first one to open her eyes.

As she clung to her brother she looked about at the chamber they were in and realized it looked very different than it had a moment ago.

Will Byers and Eleven collapsed to the ground and Dustin, Mike and Lucas rushed over to them to find what had happened. Kali was nowhere to be seen and neither was the machines they had been trapped to.

Steve looked at the room above and saw that it seemed like there was no one there watching them and raised a curious eyebrow. It was like the seven of them were all alone.

"Hopper..." Eleven said as she grabbed Mike's shirt and then started to cry. All of the group huddled together in the darkened room and cried softly together as they realized what had happened to their dear friend.

When the tears had been shed, Nancy walked toward the door where the guards had stood a moment before and was able to easily open it.

Wordlessly, and filled with a tired spirit the others followed and walked thru the seemingly empty corridors of the bunker.

They walked to the deck where Malcolm had held the adults hostage and saw nothing to even prove they had been there and finally Steve was the one to say something, "What the fuck is going on?"

As if to answer all of their unspoken questions they heard footsteps approaching and the seven kids turned to see who might be coming.

The man looked unfamiliar to any of them as he entered the room and remarked, "I thought I heard something from in here. What are you kids doing out here anyway?"

They looked at each other uncertain how to even explain and then he gestured for them to follow and stated, "Come on. I'll get you back to

camp. If the Colonel found out you were down here I would have hell to pay."

They followed him out and toward the level ground a surge of sound filling the air as they walked toward them and the man said, "We better use the fire exit."

He pushed the door to the outside and gestured for them to all go out.

The seven did so eagerly but Dustin was the one to hesitate and look around.

No longer was the base they had been in run down or decayed but now filled with life as soldiers moved about and worked and seemed as though it was brand new.

"What the..." he muttered as Steve grabbed him and they got into the back of a clunky Ford pickup parked near the side of the building.

The man that had found them started up the engine and made sure they were all inside before muttering, "I swear, this summer camp has really messed up our training regimen."

"Um... what exactly are you training for?" Nancy asked softly.

He paused as he was about to start up the engine and remarked, "Man you kids been living under a rock all year? Eisenhower gave us the go ahead. We're training for Vietnam."

The seven kids stared at him a bit longer and then he said with a sigh, "You kids need to get out more. Or stop listening to that rock and roll. It's 1955 after all, times are changing."

Then he started the engine and drove away from the camp as the group hunched down in the back of the pickup and realized how deep in trouble they really were.

END OF CHAPTER FIVE

51. Chapter Six, synopsis

CHAPTER SIX:

ORIGIN STORIES

Stuck in an unfamiliar place, seven of the gang must work together to find a way back home.

Author's note: I do believe the twist of the final chapter has really caused a lot of head scratching and believe me it will be worth seeing how it turns out! Especially for the group stuck! I hate to reveal spoilers so please keep tuned in cause the best is yet to come! And thank you for all the reviews! It makes it all worth while!

52. Chapter Six, Prologue

As the old truck bumped and trudged across the dirt road away from the military base, the seven kids could not help but to feel that everything around them was some sort of bad dream.

The man driving the truck reached for the knob that turned on the radio and adjusted it to hear some country music playing over it as they turned another corner.

"Now This here is real music! Not like that Elvis crap," the man said as he looked at the seven and realized their expressions seemed quite solemn.

Turning down the radio he commented, "Hey Look I'm not going to tell the camp counselors where you were at or what you were doing, okay? You're off the hook."

When they didn't respond he glanced at the oldest girl and remarked, "So... What is your story anyway?"

Nancy hesitated and shrugged and said, "We just wanted a little fun. And to see what the army was up to here out here."

"Uh huh," the soldier said with a nod.

Nobody spoke for a moment and he commented, "Well next time think twice about sneaking into a military base. Hey how did you get past the front gate anyway?"

The kids remained silent as they neared the camp and the soldier seemed to understand their reluctance.

"Look I get it you don't know me and I don't know you so you don't trust me. Heck I don't even know your names," he muttered.

"Michael," Mike chimed in using his proper name and the other kids knew why. If this was the past there was no telling what revealing their true identities would be.

"Barb," Nancy said.

"Thomas," Lucas replied.

"Stephen," Dustin said as he glanced at Steve Harrington apologetically.

"Ok that leaves three more. How about you hot shot?" The soldier asked teasing Will.

"Jonathan?" Will said using his older brothers name.

Steve seemed to think about it and remarked, "I'm Calvin, Calvin Klein."

The soldier seemed to consider all of those names carefully and then looked toward Eleven, the only one who hadn't said anything.

For some reason she felt safe as she replied, "Jane."

"Wow those are all great names. I will try to remember all of them, I promise. This is where you get off though," he stared at them for another moment before adding, "By the way I'm James, James Hopper."

The kids tried to hide their surprise at the young man as he slammed the door on the truck and said with a wink, "My friends call me Jim!"

53. Chapter Six, Part One

The seven kids stood there for a long time at the end of the road, watching the truck drove back out of the camp and Dustin suddenly found himself breathing heavily.

"This has got to be a bad dream," Steve said running his fingers thru his hair as he looked about the quiet campgrounds. Other kids were moving about across the lawn and Mike couldn't help but to notice that there was definitely no sign of the destruction they had caused earlier.

"This can't be real right?" El wondered even as Nancy led them away toward a secluded area of the forest.

"I think we need to start accepting the possibility that it is," Nancy said as she got on her knees and peered toward the road again and added, "Somehow, some way; we are in the past."

"Shit," Lucas said as he looked about anxiously and Dustin said, "My Mom is going to kill me!"

"Dude, your mom hasn't even had you in 1955," Will pointed out.

"Thirty years, how is that even possible?" Steve asked.

"I think we need to stop asking that question," Mike said as they all looked at El; guessing her powers were somehow responsible.

"Mike's right. The more important question is, what do we do now?" Lucas decided firmly.

The seven of them seemed to consider that for a moment and Eleven said, "We have to learn as much as we can about this place. Blend in, and figure out a way home."

"You think you could use your powers and fix this?" Will asked her. "I'm not sure... I don't even know what that machine was doing to me, or you or Kali," El answered. "Why didn't she come back with us?" Dustin wondered aloud.

"Or Jonathan?" Nancy wondered.

"He was on the outside of the spectrum I think," Mike reasoned as he heard the lunch bell and he stood up saying, "So... gather intel and we meet back here later right?"

"Mike! Get down you dunce!" Nancy said feeling like they hadn't fully formed their plan yet.

"What? Nobody is going to recognize us! We're strangers in a strange land!" Mike argued. Then he looked toward Lucas and said, "Well maybe not for you.." Lucas didn't have to ask what his friend meant.

All of them had read history reports about segregation in the 50s, and now Lucas Sinclair was going to stand out like a sore thumb.

"Nancy, your cabin, we could take Lucas there; just until we figure this out," Steve said anxiously as they all huddled in the grass. "Steve use your head I don't even know if that place was built in the 50s or not!" she countered.

"Guys I'm sure I will be fine," Lucas insisted. "No, it's definitely not a good idea. I'm surprised Hopper didn't even report you," Mike said and then they all shared another silent look at each other.

They all couldn't help but to shake two powerful images from their mind, one of Hopper being shot and bleeding out on a cold floor and then now of a younger vibrant man that hadn't faced any of the trials they had.

"All right, then we should at least try the cabin," Steve insisted. Nancy sighed and nodded looking toward the teenage boy and saying, "You, Will and Lucas get over there and the rest of us will try to figure a way out tonight. Maybe we can figure out a thing or two in the meantime."

Dustin, El, and her brother didn't seem like they really wanted to stay beside the teenage girl but didn't make any objections.

The lunch bell rang again and the group decided Now was the time to act, the two groups separated and Nancy tried to look brave as she led the way toward the campsites, hoping to find some answers along

the way.

Meanwhile Steve, Lucas and Will scurried across the grounds toward the rangers office and Harrington instructed the two kids to stay put while he tried to find some stray keys.

Steve made certain not to make a noise as he looked about the area where the cars were parked, wondering if any of the rangers would have been stupid enough to leave keys in the ignition.

Weren't people more trusting back in the 50s? He thought to himself even as he heard a soft jingle and realized someone was walking toward him.

He motioned for the two boys to hide under the porch as he and the tall stout white man met eyes and the ranger blinked for a second before commenting, "Can I Help you, son?"

Steve hesitated for a moment and said, "Umm I was just... hey what's that!"

The ranger turned around to look as Harrington grabbed a coke bottle and quickly smashed it on the back of his head.

As the man fell down, Steve grabbed his keys and checked to be sure that he hadn't injured the ranger.

"Dude, What the heck? Are you trying to get us locked up?" Lucas asked as they ran back toward the cars.

"Like you had a better plan, let's go," Harrington said as he found the correct car and they drove away from the campsite

54. Chapter Six, Part Two

Even though Nancy and the three friends had managed to grapple with the fact that they were thirty years in the past, the effect of walking into the same mess hall but finding it looked completely different was still immensely jarring.

The first thing that hit them was the groovy music that sounded like something their parents might play during a thanksgiving or some summer beach festival, apparently designed to give the cafeteria a friendly atmosphere. Then there were the clothes. Nancy hadn't really considered how easily styles and trends had changed since the 50s and now as they walked into the room, trying to blend in, she realized exactly how impossible that was going to be.

As the younger kids all stared at them wide eyed and curious, a stoutly woman walked toward them with a sense of purpose and placed her hands on her hips.

"There you are! It's about time you got here!" she boomed in frustration causing Nancy to give her a surprised look and mutter, "I'm... sorry?"

"Well you should be. The agency said they would be sending a substitute, but I never imagined it would be someone so young," the ranger said with a sigh as she adjusted her gait and added, "Well no matter, I'm just glad to get some help! These little hoodlums are over running the cafeteria already!"

"Right; I'm happy to help," Nancy said playing along with the woman's assumption about their reason for being here and then she turned to the trio and added, "These fine kids are from Hawkins, they're orphans. I figured I would do the camp some good to have more variety."

"Well aren't you all sweet," the woman said as she pinched Dustin's cheek.

"The agency has really stepped up this summer to be part of our program," the woman added and shook Nancy's hand proclaiming,

"I'm Delores by the way. It's nice to have you all on board."

"Barb, nice to meet you," she replied and turned to the three, shrugging and feeling a little guilty about suddenly shipping them into the strange environment.

Dustin, El and Mike walked toward the crowd being barraged by what seemed to be a thousand questions and comments.

"Why you wear such weird clothes?"

"Don't be rude those clothes are gnarly!"

"I heard them talk to Mrs Delores, they're orphans!"

"Does that mean your mom and dad didn't want you?"

"Do you know who your mom and dad are?"

El sighed and closed her eyes sending a flicker of energy thru the crowd to make them feel a bit queasy and the questions stopped and the trio sat down near a water fountain. "El, how in the world are we going to get home?" Mike whispered softly as they held hands.

His girlfriend didn't say anything as they sat there, but in her heart she wasn't even sure that was going to happen.

Meanwhile Nancy was handling her own problems as the female ranger provided her stacks of paperwork and files that needed to be rearranged and Mrs Delores explained, "Ever since we got that grant from the Army Reserve, this place had had a backlog of inventory issues. I won't even explain to you how bad it is over at the main office but this will be your first priority."

Nancy nodded realizing that this was probably the reason the real person didn't want to do this job. Then Delores slapped herself gently on the forehead as though something had just occurred to her. "I almost forgot! You probably didn't introduce yourself to the camp counselor yet, did you?" she asked softly.

Nancy shook her head gently and the ranger seemed to give her a scolding look before saying, "Well I will go find him then. Besides

which we need to get you a uniform."

Nancy sighed as the ranger left and started trudging thru the paper work, trying to think of anything that might be useful in here to help them blend in.

Nothing that the ranger had said really seemed to be clicking in her head though. Except for the mention of the Army Reserve. Wasn't that the same organization from 1985..? She opened the file to try and read up on it, noticing that there were several documents signed from somewhere called Fort Detrick. And a name: Colonel Vincent Ruwet.

Damn I wish I had paid attention during history she thought as she heard footsteps approach.

Quickly she slammed the door shut and pretended to work on something else as Delores returned alongside a man that looked eerily familiar.

Nancy tried to hide her shock as she realized who it was and the man shut the door. "You must be Barb, it's a pleasure for you to be here at Camp Fortune," he said reaching out to shake her hand. "I'm Doctor Owens, but you can call me Sam."